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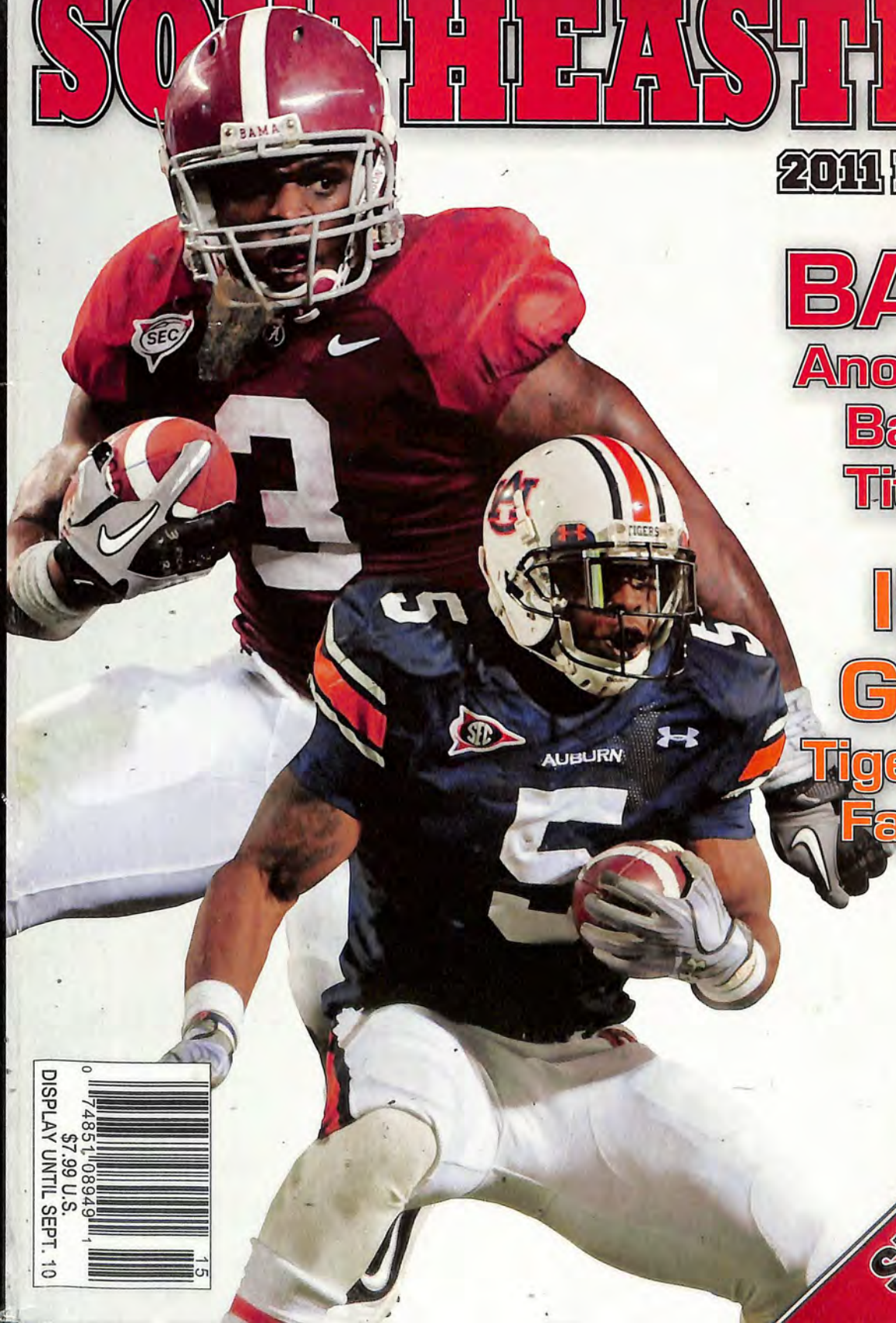

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Letter from the Publisher

Welcome to the 30th year of *Lindy's* college football. *Lindy's* began publishing in 1982 with our first Southeastern college football issue.

It just happened to be the legendary Paul "Bear" Bryant's last year of coaching at Alabama and the Heisman Trophy year for the also legendary running back — Georgia's Herschel Walker.

While a lot has changed in 30 years, the one thing that has not changed is the passion of the college football fan. Almost all of the measurables were up for college football last year — TV ratings, bowl ratings and game attendance.

I want to thank all of the fans who have supported *Lindy's* over the years and made our publications possible. Hopefully, *Lindy's* will still be publishing college issues in 30 years.

Lindy's has added the Mountain West preview to our regional editions this year. It can be purchased on the newsstand in July or ordered from our office/website.

Have a great season!

Sincerely,

Lindy Davis Jr.

Lindy Davis

PS: As *Lindy's* went to press, the Southeast (primarily our home state of Alabama) was hit with one of the most devastating series of tornadoes in U.S. history. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those affected.

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NATIONAL PICKS

Who's gonna end the SEC's run? How 'bout these guys?

Photo by Jackson Laizure/Getty Images

1. OKLAHOMA

You could see this one coming. Oklahoma defeated explosive Oklahoma State in the regular-season finale, denied Nebraska a happy swan song in the Big 12 title game and, glory be, finally got back in the BCS win column after five consecutive big-bowl losses, routing UConn.

And, then, when the deadline passed for underclassmen to declare for the NFL draft, wide receiver Ryan Broyles and linebacker Travis Lewis still had "Sooners" on the front of their jerseys.

There's just a certain amount of logic to this: By virtue of how the Sooners did last season, who they have coming back this season and a schedule that is tough — but not *too tough* — Oklahoma is *Lindy's* No. 1.

The Sooners never really went away. That 8-5 injury-filled season of 2009 was just that — filled with injuries. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with the program, or with coach Bob Stoops, or with the staff's recruiting. To be back chasing titles is right where Oklahoma belongs.

THE GOOD NEWS: Nine starters are back from a fabulous offense. QB Landry Jones threw for 4,718 yards and 38 touchdowns last season. He's superb on long-range throws, with no shortage of targets that includes Broyles and Kenny Stills. New play-caller Josh Huepel isn't shy. Sophomore RB Roy Finch is another big-play threat. The linebackers are among the best in the nation and OU has ample experience at defensive end.

THE BAD NEWS: The secondary rates as a question mark after the loss of Quinton Carter and others. Starting RT Jarvis Jones is going to miss the start of the season because of a torn patellar tendon, and it would have been nice to have an intact line for the second game of the year — at Florida State on Sept. 17. The 'Noles — and defensive coordinator Mark Stoops — are aching for revenge for a 47-17 rollover in Norman last season.

OUR CALL: An eighth Big 12 title in 12 years would be nice — *will* be nice — but the Sooners have bigger designs than just stepping over laboring Texas, stiffing-arming Bedlam and winning a scaled-down league. The SEC's national championship winning streak has to end sometime, right? OU has the offense and the athletes to do it.

2. ALABAMA

It's our turn again

The BCS national championship has been the exclusive property of the SEC for five straight seasons and the state of Alabama for two years in a row, and the Crimson Tide sees no reason to allow that to change. This year, though, they plan to take the trophy back from arch-rival Auburn ... and you better bring an elephant gun if you plan to stop them and the best collection of defensive backs/linebackers in the country.

THE GOOD NEWS: Nick Saban is a defensive coach who likes to win with defense, and, boy, does he have a defense he can win with. With studs like linebacker Dont'a Hightower, cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick and safety Mark Barron (and much more), 'Bama is loaded for bear.

THE BAD NEWS: The Tide couldn't choose between quarterbacks AJ McCarron and Phillip Sims in spring practice. Indecision there can ruin a team, but knowing Saban, he won't let it be much of an issue. He's kind of funny that way.

OUR CALL: No matter who plays quarterback, handing the football to Trent Richardson behind an offensive line with four starters returning will make the job easy. The SEC West title will likely come down to LSU's trip to Tuscaloosa on Nov. 5.

3. OREGON

Think USC. Only green, and lots of rain.

In a copy-cat college football world, everybody wants what the Ducks are having, and we're not just talking about all the wardrobe changes ... although that has a lot to do with it. It's also the whole spread-option, up-tempo offense, lightning-quick defense, "Win the Day" thing Oregon has going on. Speaking of going, the Ducks aren't going away after battling Auburn on even terms in the national championship game for 59 minutes and 58 seconds.

THE GOOD NEWS: LaMichael James, the nation's leader rusher last season with 1,731 yards, could have gone pro but came back to lead the fastest backfield in the nation. QB Darron Thomas can win with the run or pass. Nobody can change a game faster than CB/PR Cliff Harris.

THE BAD NEWS: Oregon loses three starters from its defensive front, returning only DE Terrell Turner. Will the defensive front seven be ready for the opening-day challenge of big-man LSU in Arlington, Texas? The Ducks' biggest Pac-10 game is on the road, at Stanford.

OUR CALL: To beat the Ducks, you better bring your fast-twitch muscles. This is starting to look like USC from several years ago, with strings of conference championships and continued pursuit of the BCS title.

4. LSU

Sink or Swim with Les

Despite his 2007 national championship, Les Miles has had a rocky relationship with LSU fans. Some love his Mad Hatter game management, and others devalue the BCS title on his resume because it came with players Nick Saban recruited. Well, love him or loathe him, Tiger fans, he's all yours now. When Miles either turned down or wasn't offered the Michigan job, he re-upped in Baton Rouge through 2017.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Jordan Jefferson looked like he knew what he was doing throwing the ball in a Cotton Bowl win over Texas A&M. He doesn't have to match his three passing touchdowns in every game, but the Tigers will be hard to stop if he does.

THE BAD NEWS: It's bad enough playing at Alabama to decide the SEC West. It could get worse if new offensive coordinator Steve Kragthorpe is the guy who failed in four seasons as the head man at Louisville and not the guy who seemed like the next big coaching thing at Tulsa.

OUR CALL: Replacing CB Patrick Peterson, LB Kelvin Sheppard and RB Stephen Ridley won't be easy, but the Tigers' perennially strong recruiting classes make for little concern. If victorious over Oregon in the opener, it could be party time on the bayou.

5. FLORIDA STATE

'Noles ready for return to prime time

Florida State won't return to national prominence without the gold-standard recruiting classes that defined Bobby Bowden's 1990s teams. Guess what's happening in Tallahassee? Jimbo Fisher is on his way to earning a star on Stadium Drive outside Doak Campbell, chasing a 10-win debut season with a recruiting haul that *Lindy's* — and many, many others — considered the best in the nation. Sixteen starters are back. Could a complete renaissance be far behind?

THE GOOD NEWS: Christian who? QB E.J. Manuel is agile, fast and built to last ... plus he was a part-time starter in '10. Fisher's defense carries itself like a band of back-alley bullies. DE Brandon Jenkins (21.5 tackles for loss, 13.5 sacks last year) is the baddest of them all.

THE BAD NEWS: Manuel might look the part of prototype passer, but he's been an enigma. Part of the issue: Injuries and position-flips canceled a chance for the O-line to develop cohesion in the spring. And while Bert Reed is a nice weapon ... is he a No. 1 receiver?

OUR CALL: Break out the axe handle and ready the tomahawk chop, FSU is on the cusp of being F-S-U again. If they're ready for Oklahoma (Sept. 17), the 'Noles can hit the meat of their schedule with those ol' national title dreams.

6. BOISE STATE

Broncs busted? Hold the blue notes

New conference, but the same old roadmap for Boise State: The Broncos have to win 'em all to even sniff the BCS championship game. The hope — and the hype — of doing just that isn't the same as last season after Boise State lost 11 starters from a 12-1 team, many of them multi-year fixtures. Still, it's mostly business as usual: The Broncos, leaving behind the WAC, are set up for another run at a BCS bowl and a league title in their first year in the Mountain West.

THE GOOD NEWS: Chris Petersen is still coaching. QB Kellen Moore, RB Doug Martin and all but one member of the defensive line that dominated last year are among the returning starters. After opening with Georgia in Atlanta, most of the best opponents — notably, TCU — appear on the blue turf.

THE BAD NEWS: Key playmakers on both sides left titanic holes, chiefly wide receivers Austin Pettis and Titus Young (a combined 142 catches and 19 touchdowns), and safety Jeron Johnson, the team's leading tackler for three straight seasons.

OUR CALL: Moore has to be close to perfect in the biggest games — which probably will happen — and Boise State still could be talking about a "quest for perfection" late in the season.

7. OKLAHOMA STATE

Time to Cowboy up

Boone Pickens isn't getting any younger ... or any more patient. The man who essentially owns Oklahoma State's athletic department isn't shy about saying he wants to win championships. If Mike Gundy can't deliver, T. Boone might T-Bone the former OSU quarterback, no matter that Gundy has four years left on his contract, or whether he's a man who used to be 40. The time to win is now.

THE GOOD NEWS: Wide receiver Justin Blackmon turned his back on the NFL and returns to give standout quarterback Brandon Weeden a go-to threat. Opponents can't get too enamored with Blackmon or else fellow receiver Tracy Moore will make them pay.

THE BAD NEWS: The Cowboys' defense allowed 98 combined points in losses to Oklahoma and Nebraska. Other places, it might be good news that six starters are gone. But OSU may not have the depth to cover those losses. Will the offense still soar without coordinator Dana Holgorsen?

OUR CALL: Oklahoma goes to Stillwater at season's end, but consecutive October games at Texas and Missouri are scary. If Gundy gets by those, he'll have the chance to make T. Boone a happy man with a Bedlam win and perhaps a trip to the BCS.

8. STANFORD

Luck is on their side, but is it enough?

That Andrew Luck is still on The Farm and coach Jim Harbaugh is gone to the 49ers is a trade-off Stanford fans can live with, at least for now. The Cardinal promoted offensive coordinator David Shaw, the team's popular offensive coordinator, so Stanford will roll on, completely committed to a hard-nosed, blue-collar attitude. And having a dizzying array of offensive formations, led by the best quarterback prospect in more than a decade, never hurts.

THE GOOD NEWS: Luck is joined in a loaded backfield by junior Stepfan Taylor, who rushed for 1,137 yards last season. O-linemen David DeCastro and Jonathan Martin are two of the best in the Pac-12. LB Shayne Skov was last seen sacking Virginia Tech three times in the Orange Bowl.

THE BAD NEWS: Shaw doesn't have Harbaugh's boisterous personality, so how is all that going to play out? Stanford has to break in three new starting offensive linemen. Luck is breaking in new WRs and Stanford has to get by Oregon, which begs the question: Does the Cardinal have enough athletes?

OUR CALL: Luck's presence spackles holes elsewhere on the roster and gives the Cardinal a chance to go back to the BCS. Stanford can't afford to falter while the window of opportunity remains wide open.

9. NEBRASKA

Huskers are in Big Ten to win it

Leaving behind its Big 8/Big 12 past — and coming off successive 10-win campaigns for the first time since 2000-01 — Nebraska splashes down in the Big Ten's Legends division. The Cornhuskers packed a title-worthy defense for the trip, and the Blackshirts feature another headlining defensive tackle, Jared Crick (19 career sacks). The key on offense: Mobile but inconsistent QB Taylor Martinez, who could be the key figure in this new chapter ... assuming he holds off what the coaching staff said was a "legit challenge" from Brion Carnes and Cody Green.

THE GOOD NEWS: Playmakers are in ample supply. More importantly, the timing couldn't be better for NU. Ohio State reckons to be a disjointed bunch in its early October visit to Memorial Stadium, and Wisconsin's key personnel losses make the Big Ten opener in Madison less daunting.

THE BAD NEWS: Of Nebraska's key losses, CB Prince Amukamara is the name everyone knows. But the crippling losses might be on the offensive line, where three new starters were introduced to mixed spring reviews.

OUR CALL: Move over, Buckeyes. Nebraska is set to end Ohio State's Decade of Dominance. The Big Ten champ still wears scarlet ... this time mixed with cream, not gray.

10. ARKANSAS

Bringing the Hammer, but not a Mallett

Now we're going to find out how much of Arkansas' resurgence was Ryan Mallett falling into its lap and how much was plucking Bobby Petrino away from the NFL. One of them, or both, was the reason Arkansas made its first BCS appearance last season. Now Mallet is off to the NFL, but Petrino is locked in long term, which makes them go Hog wild in Fayetteville.

THE GOOD NEWS: Backup quarterback Tyler Wilson went 25 of 34 for 332 yards and four touchdowns subbing for an injured Mallett last year against Auburn. So now you know why few panicked when Mallett went to the NFL. It also helps that Knile Davis is back at tailback.

THE BAD NEWS: If you like to throw the ball downfield — and Arkansas does — then you need protection. The loss of three starters on the offensive line, including both tackles, is far from ideal, given the pass-rush talent in the SEC.

OUR CALL: You can be good — darn good — and still not be good enough in the SEC. That's particularly true in the West this year, and it's doubly true because Arkansas must play at Alabama (Sept. 24) and LSU (Nov. 25).

11. SOUTH CAROLINA

Talented crew ready to seize SEC East again

Steve Spurrier delivered South Carolina its first SEC East crown last season when the rest of the division was down, and the Ol' Ball Coach looks to further stomp his foot on the reloading efforts at Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. No team in the East, and few in the country, has as many game-breaking players as the Gamecocks — RB Marcus Lattimore, WR Alshon Jeffery, CB Stephon Gilmore, DE Devin Taylor ... and, very possibly, incoming freshman defensive end Jadeveon Clowney.

THE GOOD NEWS: Lattimore and Jeffery go a long way to making up for whatever deficiencies South Carolina has at quarterback. The Gamecocks cleared big hurdles last season — beating a No. 1 team (Alabama) and winning in Florida's Swamp for the first time ever.

THE BAD NEWS: QB Stephen Garcia compiles suspensions at only a slightly slower rate than he does interceptions. Spurrier professes "complete confidence" in backup Connor Shaw, but the position looms as a major question mark on a team with 13 returning starters.

OUR CALL: Spurrier is still throwing heat at 66. Even with the uncertainty at quarterback, this should be the second 10-win season in school history ... and not playing 'Bama or LSU in the regular season helps.

12. VIRGINIA TECH

Nothing flashy, just 10 more wins in Blacksburg

There's nothing much safer than picking Virginia Tech to nestle somewhere around the Top 10. Frank Beamer's Hokies have posted double-digit victories in each of the past seven seasons. You know who else has done that? Not Texas nor Ohio State. Not Alabama, Ohio State, USC or Oklahoma. In fact, nobody. Let's just assume that no matter the personnel turnover or the schedule that the Hokies are going to win the Coastal Division and get 10 wins or more.

THE GOOD NEWS: Jayron Hosley is just another standout Tech cornerback. He had nine interceptions last season. RB David Wilson is no longer an apprentice; he's a zippity-quick No. 1 back. The non-conference schedule isn't overly taxing. Hokies miss FSU in the regular season.

THE BAD NEWS: QB Logan Thomas played to good reviews in the spring, although a drop-off from ACC Player of the Year Tyrod Taylor can't be helped. Beamer shuffled the coaching staff in the offseason ... for the better or worse?

OUR CALL: The Hokies, while not looking scary-good, don't appear to have many "losable" games on their schedule. Of course, we said the same thing before they played James Madison last year, too.

13. TEXAS A&M

Big 12 title would be nice payoff for Sherman's crew

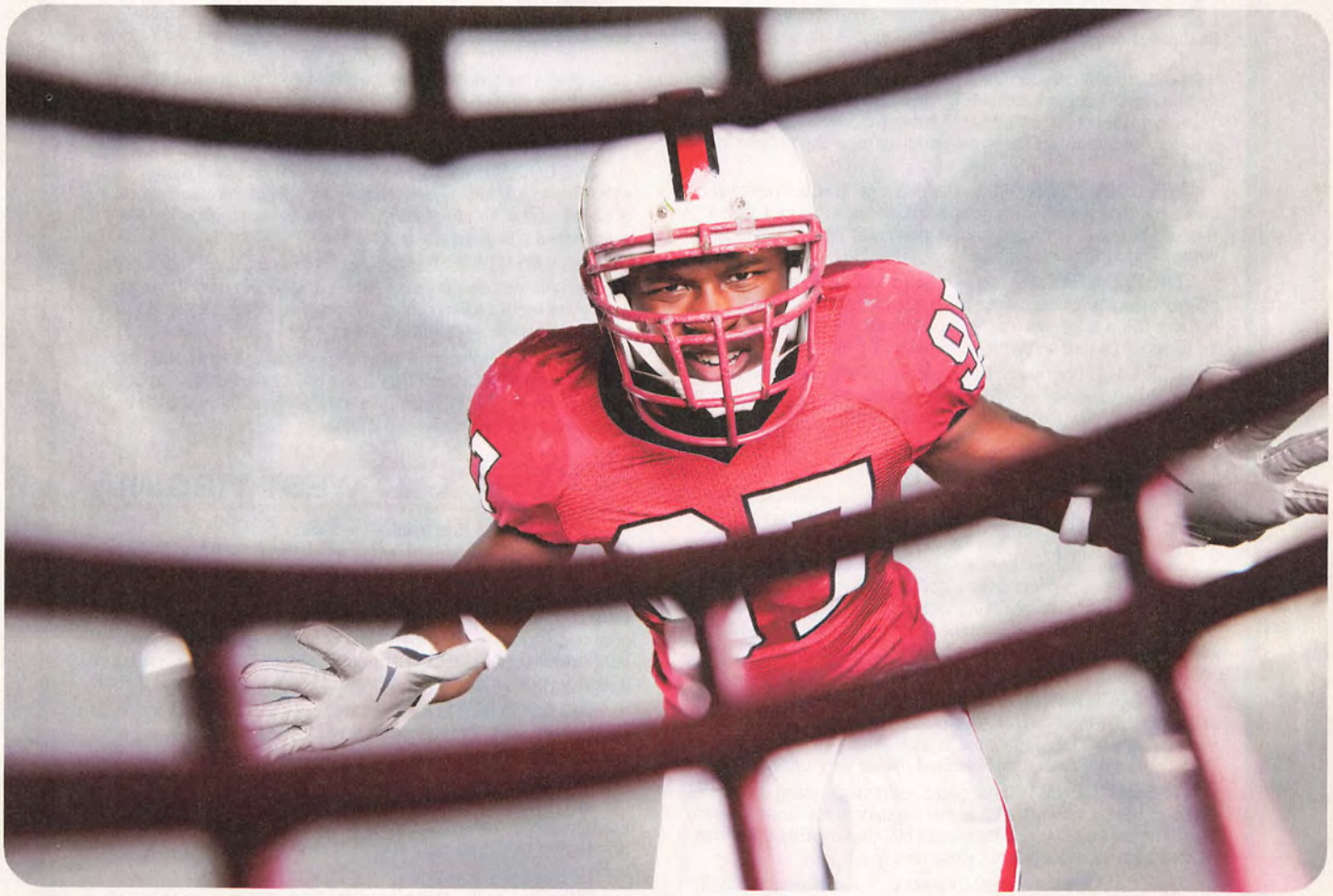
Mike Sherman started to make good last year on that seven-year contract he signed after the 2007 season, looking less like an NFL retread and more like a guy who can get and keep Texas A&M back among the top of the Big 12. After a 9-4 season — with feel-good wins over Oklahoma, Nebraska and Texas — Sherman climbed to .500 (19-19) over his three years in College Station. With this team's offensive riches and 18 returning starters, the Aggies will be scaling higher.

THE GOOD NEWS: Last season turned around when QB Ryan Tannehill took over as the starter. He's back, with primo target Jeff Fuller and RB Cyrus Gray, who finished with six consecutive 100-yard efforts, including a 223-yard beat-down against Texas. RB Christine Michael is back from injury.

THE BAD NEWS: The Aggies' six-game conference winning streak — and a Von Miller-less defense — will be tested right away in the league opener vs. visiting Oklahoma State. The road to the Big 12 title goes through Norman on Nov. 5.

OUR CALL: Sherman has built this the right way, absorbing inevitable lumps as he played so many young players after he arrived. The payoff should be pretty sweet.

Seats So Close
You Think You're On The Field



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14. OHIO STATE

A Tale of two seasons

The Buckeyes have a host of unknowns, and not just because they lost seven starters on defense, five on offense and their kicker. That only hints at the holes OSU must fill, because quarterback Terrelle Pryor, tailback Daniel Herron, receiver DeVier Posey, tackle Mike Adams and defensive tackle Solomon Thomas must sit out the first five games because of an NCAA suspension. Oh, yeah, head coach Jim Tressel can't coach on game day for those first five games, either.

THE GOOD NEWS: OSU is scheduled to get Tressel, Pryor and Co. back before the season turns its most difficult, starting with a road game at Nebraska on Oct. 8. And in its division of the new Big Ten, Ohio State gets Wisconsin and Penn State at home.

THE BAD NEWS: The offense looked dreadful in the spring, with none of Pryor's four possible successors taking command. Just run it then? Sorry, Herron is OSU's only proven commodity at tailback. The suspensions mean the Bucks will be short-handed at Miami and vs. Michigan State.

OUR CALL: Don't spit on their grave yet. Division rivals Penn State and Wisconsin have questions, too. This isn't a national-championship edition, but bet on OSU playing in the inaugural league title game.

15. TCU

Can the D-train keep rolling at TCU?

Gary Patterson is 98-28 in Fort Worth, so there will be no eulogy for a TCU team that has to replace quarterback Andy Dalton. The Horned Frogs, the nation's leader in total defense three years running, have a scheme that hasn't been cracked in the Mountain West and they are good enough to reach the key stretch in their schedule unscathed — Oct. 28 against newly independent BYU at Cowboys Stadium, Nov. 12 at Boise State.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Casey Pachall inspired excessive confidence in the spring as a mobile and accurate passer. RB Ed Wesley averaged 6.5 yards per carry in 2010 and becomes TCU's featured attraction. LB Tank Carder wowed Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl and has an NFL future.

THE BAD NEWS: TCU was gutted up the middle, losing Dalton, three offensive line starters and three defensive line starters. With Boise State and TCU being two football ships passing in the Mountain West night, the Frogs must take this title on the blue turf, where nobody ever wins.

OUR CALL: With a modest 10 starters back, the follow-up to a 12-0 regular season and momentous Rose Bowl victory suggests a slide in TCU's final MWC season. But the Horned Frogs won't fall far.

16. GEORGIA

These Dawgs won't stay down

Georgia, 6-7 last season, is coming off its first losing record since 1996, so the talk in the offseason is about how many victories coach Mark Richt needs to keep his job. Nine? How about mixing in a win over rival Florida and its new coach, Will Muschamp? Richt is under fire but hasn't gotten dumb in the past couple of years, and he hasn't stopped recruiting. With ample talent, the problems of last season — A.J. Green's suspension, lack of effort and conditioning — are non-issues and fixable in 2011.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore Aaron Murray should be one of the better quarterbacks in the SEC. P Drew Butler and PK Blair Walsh form the best kicking combo in the country. And let's face it: Not having to playing Alabama, LSU and Arkansas is H-U-G-E.

THE BAD NEWS: Murray doesn't have the comfort of throwing to Green, and the Dawgs are looking for someone special to step up other than Tavarres King. The Dawgs beat nobody who ended up with a winning record last season.

OUR CALL: Georgia gets to prove it in the first two weeks — vs. Boise State (in Atlanta) and home against South Carolina — but we're saying this is a big-time bounce-back season.

17. WISCONSIN

No feet of Clay? No worries.

If there were a museum for Big Ten football, Bret Bielema could keep Woody Hayes and Bo Schembechler company in the dinosaur section. While everyone else has gone ga-ga over the spread, Bielema continues to pound away with the same physical style Barry Alvarez used to make the Badgers relevant. OK, so tailback John Clay left early for the NFL. Who cares? James White and Montee Ball are ready to bring the pain.

THE GOOD NEWS: White and Ball are elite backs with enough style differences to form an ideal one-two punch. Wisconsin never runs out of hulking linemen, so it figures to run very well, and that should allow new quarterback Jon Budmayr time to develop.

THE BAD NEWS: Wisconsin is thin in some key areas. Wide receiver Nick Toon and linebacker Chris Borland both missed the spring. If they stay healthy, that soothes a lot of concern. Budmayr also needs a tight end to step forward as a reliable safety valve.

OUR CALL: Budmayr will have five games to get comfortable before a very uncomfortable October. The Badgers play host to Nebraska on Oct. 1, then finish the month at Michigan State and Ohio State. The road game in Columbus tips the Leaders Division to OSU.

18. WEST VIRGINIA

Say goodbye to Stew

It should be an interesting fall in Morgantown. For certain, it will be Bill Stewart's last as head coach. He was not-so-gently shoved aside by athletic director Oliver Luck, who hired coordinator Dana Holgorsen from Oklahoma State as head coach in waiting. So, Uncle Bill and his folksy ways get a victory tour, but if he hadn't agreed to Holgorsen's arrival, Stewart would have been out immediately. His swan song should be memorable, ending with a trip to the BCS.

THE GOOD NEWS: Holgorsen knows how to put up points and he has the quarterback to do it. Geno Smith was All-Big East last year, and with a better stable of receivers than running backs, he appears poised to fit nicely into Holgorsen's spread.

THE BAD NEWS: WVU ranked third nationally in defense a year ago. Even though the Mountaineers kept coordinator Jeff Casteel amid the staff turnover, they didn't keep much in terms of personnel as Casteel must replace seven starters.

OUR CALL: If WVU wants to win the Big East, now would be a good time, before TCU's arrival. Managing the staff politics could be a nightmare, but the talent level is too great to overlook.

19. NOTRE DAME

No turning back now

So much for Brian Kelly having modest expectations entering Year Two. Kelly could have bought himself some more patience among the fan base after back-to-back losses to Navy and Tulsa in late October. It sure looked like it was going to take Kelly more than five minutes to turn things around. But winning four in a row after that, including a victory at nemesis USC and a convincing Sun Bowl triumph over Miami, has Irish faithful thinking big.

THE GOOD NEWS: No one would have tagged quarterback as a position of strength last season, but Kelly developed both Dayne Crist and Tommy Rees into winners. Both figure to be much better this season. The improving defense allowed just 39 points in the last four games.

THE BAD NEWS: Quarterback controversies are never good. Kelly has an impatient streak in him. Whoever he picks as the starter won't flourish if there's a quick hook coming from the sideline. The running game needs a boost to even get to "pedestrian" status.

OUR CALL: With no running back depth, Notre Dame's offense will have to be an air show. That might put the defense on the field a lot, but if that unit plays like it did from November on, the Irish could sneak into the BCS.

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20. FLORIDA

Muschamp must win big. Will it be now or later?

Will Muschamp, lauded for his efforts as defensive coordinator at LSU, Auburn and Texas, traded in his head coach in-waiting card with the Longhorns for a chance to inherit Urban Meyer's good works at Florida. Muschamp will be 40 — he's a man! — when the season begins, and he's long been ready for this moment. He has the kind of gravitational pull that will play with recruits and boosters ... but does he have the quarterback to win big right away?

THE GOOD NEWS: Muschamp brought in Charlie Weis, who hasn't failed as an offensive coordinator. His pro-style attack fits the sensibilities of QB John Brantley, although "still a work-in-progress" described his spring. The Gators look good at linebacker and have speed at running back.

THE BAD NEWS: Here's a tall mountain: Games at Auburn, LSU and South Carolina. The Gators lack power in the running game and aren't yet scary at receiver. The defense's top playmaker — CB Janoris Jenkins — was kicked off the team.

OUR CALL: Being in the back end of the Top 25 isn't Florida's style, but it's a nicer neighborhood, for now, than the ones inhabited by USC, Texas, Michigan, Miami, Tennessee ...

21. MISSISSIPPI STATE

The biggest game is already a win

Mississippi State has never won nine or more games in consecutive seasons in 116 years of football, but it has a head start on doing that in 2011. That's because the Bulldogs are already 1-0 (wink, wink) given that they retained coach Dan Mullen when he seemed certain to be the choice to succeed Urban Meyer at Florida. Mullen's offense could soar this season, and he is aiming for 42 points per game. Oh, is that all?

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Chris Relf, TB Vick Ballard and the team's top four wideouts all return and should build on the success that began late last year with three games of 30-plus points. The running game also was pretty good, ranked 16th in the nation.

THE BAD NEWS: Relf completed 65 percent of his passes last year but threw for only 1,789 yards. If Mississippi State wants to be explosive, he must maintain his completion rate but increase the distance on his throws. On defense, State has three new starting linebackers.

OUR CALL: The Bulldogs have already beaten the odds by getting Mullen back for a third year in Starkville. He probably won't be there forever, so this is the time to strike. Too bad the SEC West is uber-loaded.

22. MICHIGAN STATE

Success will depend on talent in the trenches

Judging by Michigan State's two losses last season — 37-6 at Iowa and 49-7 to Alabama in the Capital One Bowl — there's no reason for Sparty to party. But here's the big picture: A largely unexpected 11-2 season gives coach Mark Dantonio reason to believe he's on the verge of big things in East Lansing. The schedule shapes up favorably for confidence-building, including Oct. 1 at Ohio State before the Terrelle Pryor-led reinforcements return for the Bucks.

THE GOOD NEWS: Defensive-minded Dantonio has one of the best d-lines in the Big Ten. Junior RB Edwin Baker said he's shooting for Lorenzo White (circa 1985) territory — his stated goal is 2,000 yards and 21 touchdowns. QB Kirk Cousins is one of Big Ten's best.

THE BAD NEWS: The kicking game was a crapshoot in spring drills. With only his two starting guards back, Cousins could be in for a long year if the Spartans' three young OL starters buckle under pressure. JC transfer Fou Fonoti is the projected savior up front.

OUR CALL: Repeating as co-Big Ten champions is asking too much. Riding to another New Year's Day bowl game is reasonable, but that depends on Dantonio building a championship-caliber defense.

23. MISSOURI

Hoping Gabbert's success runs in family

Missouri had the perfect triggerman for Gary Pinkel's offense in quarterback Blaine Gabbert, but his early departure for the NFL leaves the Tigers with a giant hole to fill. Can it be filled by Gabbert's brother, Tyler, a redshirt freshman? If so, the Tigers could be the surprise of the Big 12 ... or, well, at least good enough to stay ahead of Texas.

THE GOOD NEWS: Missouri is better positioned to withstand the loss of its headliner on defense than on offense. So, even though DE Aldon Smith is gone, the Tigers shouldn't suffer much. They are deep and talented at end (Jacquies Smith and Brad Madison), which is a big advantage in the pass-happy Big 12.

THE BAD NEWS: Mizzou has four starting linemen, its top five tailbacks and a bevy of wideouts returning. All it lacks — all — is a guy to run the show. James Franklin had an uneven spring and Gabbert did, too. Pinkel might unhappily play both until someone emerges.

OUR CALL: Playing Arizona State, Oklahoma and Kansas State on the road within the first five games is not the way to bring along a young quarterback. Missouri will struggle early, but work its way back into the Top 25.

24. AUBURN

Repeat's not likely, but neither is a big slide

An eighth SEC team in our Top 25? Yeah, it probably won't end up that way — six SEC teams were ranked at the end of the last season, with another receiving votes — but from this preseason outpost, all eight sure appear deserving. Besides, whose going to tell the defending national champs they start the season unranked? While recognizing that the personnel losses cut deep across The Plains, coach Gene Chizik and the team's excellent young talent deserve the benefit of the doubt.

THE GOOD NEWS: Running Back U. is in fine shape. Sophomore Michael Dyer rushed for more yards as an Auburn freshman (1,093) than some guy named Bo. Dyer and RB Onterrio McCalebb will carry the offense in as many ways as possible.

THE BAD NEWS: No Cam Newton. No Nick Fairley. Four starters gone from the offensive line. Will the QB battle (Barrett Trotter, Clint Moseley, incoming freshman Kiehl Frazier) linger? If last season's comeback magic is gone, the Tigers are toast.

OUR CALL: Alabama went from 2009 national champs to fourth in the SEC West in 2010. The same fate — or worse — could await the Tigers. But they'll beat a couple of really good teams along the way.

25. ARIZONA STATE

Fear the fork? OK, yeah. We're kind of spooked.

In a spring re-branding of the athletic department, Arizona State de-emphasized the Walt Disney-styled Sparky mascot in favor of a new pitchfork logo. "Fear the Fork!" the school proclaimed. Really? Can't wait until opposing student sections conjure some clever twists on the word "fork." Beyond the spring fashion show, with new helmets and all-black uniforms, ASU actually might strut on the field with 20 returning starters back from a 6-6 team.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Brock Osweiler, who led ASU to season-ending wins over UCLA and Arizona after Steven Threet went down with a concussion, takes the reins with ample help at the skill positions. LB Vontaze Burfict in an all-black uniform: The most fearsome site in college football.

THE BAD NEWS: All-Pac-10 CB Omar Bolden and WR T.J. Simpson suffered ACL injuries in the spring, endangering their 2011 seasons. The buzz around Osweiler would be stifled if Arizona hadn't dropped four or five easy interceptions. Is the big QB ready for the full-time gig?

OUR CALL: It might not take much to win the first Pac-12 South, and ASU catches a break by missing Stanford in the crossover schedule. The experienced Devils get the nod, with their pitchfork pointing up.

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10. Arkansas	SEC	3	
11. South Carolina	SEC	4	
12. Virginia Tech	ACC	2	
13. Texas A&M	Big 12	3	
14. Ohio State	Big Ten	2	
15. TCU	MWC	2	
16. Georgia	SEC	5	
17. Wisconsin	Big Ten	3	
18. West Virginia	Big East	1	
19. Notre Dame	IND	1	
20. Florida	SEC	6	
21. Mississippi State	SEC	7	
22. Michigan State	Big Ten	4	
23. Missouri	Big 12	4	
24. Auburn	SEC	8	
25. Arizona State	Pac-12	3	

No.	Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
26.	Miami	ACC	3	Al Golden will mold good talent and make Hurricanes tougher.
27.	USC	Pac-12	4	Could easily win Pac-12 South, but no margin of error with depth.
28.	Texas	Big 12	5	Offense remains broken, but Horns can't be that bad again, right?
29.	Michigan	Big Ten	5	With new-coach energy (and OSU a mess), is Big Blue on way back?
30.	Clemson	ACC	4	Early three-game stretch: Auburn, Florida State, at Virginia Tech.
31.	North Carolina	ACC	5	Ample NFL talent remains after suspension-filled 2010 season.
32.	Texas Tech	Big 12	6	Another solid outfit, but are Raiders still as explosive offensively?
33.	USF	Big East	2	Won at Miami last season; QB B.J. Daniels back to lead offense.
34.	Baylor	Big 12	7	Looking to make a statement in Thursday opener vs. TCU in Waco.
35.	Air Force	MWC	3	Veteran offensive personnel will make Falcons tough to stop.
36.	Penn State	Big Ten	6	Joe Paterno's 46th season might be merely above average.
37.	San Diego State	MWC	4	Rocky Long back as a head coach, trying to maintain momentum.
38.	Pittsburgh	Big East	3	Todd Graham brings energy, spread offense to Panthers.
39.	UCF	C-USA	1	Building off bowl win vs. Georgia; looking to repeat in C-USA.
40.	BYU	IND	2	Tough early sked awaits for QB Jake Heaps, now-indy Cougars.
41.	Iowa	Big Ten	7	OL is very good, but there is a lot of rebuilding to do on DL.
42.	Utah	Pac-12	5	Three straight years of double-digit wins, but this ain't the MWC.
43.	Maryland	ACC	6	Terps booted Ralph Friedgen, hired a good one in Randy Edsall.
44.	Northwestern	Big Ten	8	With QB Dan Persa back, Wildcats looking for fourth straight bowl.
45.	Southern Miss	C-USA	2	Will challenge in C-USA behind veteran QB Austin Davis.
46.	Georgia Tech	ACC	7	Should start fast against easy schedule to erase 2010 memories.
47.	Arizona	Pac-12	6	Wildcats carry burden of five-game losing streak into new season.
48.	Cincinnati	Big East	4	Big drop-off last year but strong offensive points to a bounce-back.
49.	Connecticut	Big East	5	New coach Paul Pasqualoni breaks in new quarterback, running back.
50.	Boston College	ACC	8	Streaky 2010 team brings back RB Montel Harris, LB Luke Kuechly.
51.	Washington	Pac-12	7	With Jake Locker: Fringe bowl team. Without Jake: Kinda the same.
52.	Tennessee	SEC	9	Just not the same ol' talent level. Is QB Tyler Bray the answer?
53.	SMU	C-USA	3	With high-powered offense, should repeat as West Division champs.
54.	Houston	C-USA	4	The Cougars' passing attack should scare anyone they play.
55.	Cal	Pac-12	8	Lost Bay buzz; 2010 was first losing record in Tedford's nine years.
56.	Tulsa	C-USA	5	Prolific offense will be tested by Oklahoma, Okie State, Boise State.
57.	Navy	IND	3	Coaches high on QB Kriss Proctor, filling the shoes of Ricky Dobbs.
58.	Purdue	Big Ten	9	QB battle? Robert Marve (ACL) returns in fall to battle Rob Henry.
59.	NC State	ACC	9	Nine wins last season was most for the Wolfpack since 2002.
60.	Oregon State	Pac-12	9	Whither the Rodgers? Jacquizz turned pro; James rehabbing knee.
61.	Kansas State	Big 12	8	Cats need more offense; transfer RB Bryce Brown comes on board.
62.	Ole Miss	SEC	10	Houston Nutt losing contact with the rest of the SEC West?
63.	Kentucky	SEC	11	Life without Randall Cobb will make it hard for bowl streak to hit six.
64.	Miami (Ohio)	MAC	1	Before messing up at Pitt, Michael Haywood left team in great shape.
65.	Hawaii	WAC	1	Warriors, with QB Bryant Moniz, take advantage of a down league.
66.	Syracuse	Big East	6	Orange making its way back; another eight wins this season?
67.	Fresno State	WAC	2	No Boise hurdle in 2011; RB Robbie Rouse leads Dogs to title?
68.	Virginia	ACC	10	Just 1-7 in ACC last year, but 19 starters are back for Mike London.
69.	Nevada	WAC	3	Must reload Pistol without Colin Kapaernik and Vai Taua.
70.	Illinois	Big Ten	10	After bounce-back 2010, Illini might have enough for a small bowl.
71.	Louisville	Big East	7	Nice debut season for Charlie Strong, but there's rebuilding to do.
72.	Duke	ACC	11	Defense must improve before close losses turn into close wins.
73.	Iowa State	Big 12	9	New QB, new RB ... and the Cyclones trying to squeeze into a bowl.
74.	UCLA	Pac-12	10	Poor quarterback play continues to dog Rick Neuheisel's rebuilding.
75.	Colorado	Pac-12	11	New coach, new conference could stir the slumbering Buffaloes.
76.	Rutgers	Big East	8	Major overall (assistants, schemes) after last-place finish in 2010.
77.	Troy	Sun Belt	1	Has at least shared Sun Belt title for past five years; here's one more.
78.	Army	IND	4	Rich Ellerson coached 'em up to a bowl, should do the same again.
79.	Indiana	Big Ten	11	Bill Lynch fizzled, so in comes Kevin Wilson from Oklahoma.
80.	Wake Forest	ACC	12	Tumbled last season. Can young skill players lead Deacons back?
81.	Toledo	MAC	2	Went 7-1 in league last year; Rockets just have to sort out QB spot.
82.	East Carolina	C-USA	6	QB Dominique Davis is dynamic; Pirates looking for much more D.
83.	Washington State	Pac-12	12	Just when the Cougs figured they couldn't finish lower than 10th ...
84.	Vanderbilt	SEC	12	New coach James Franklin has a few nice players, just not enough.
85.	Kansas	Big 12	10	Not enough playmakers right now for coach Turner Gill.
86.	Minnesota	Big Ten	12	Jerry Kill comes off successful stint at N. Illinois to lead the Gophers.
87.	FIU	Sun Belt	2	Ready for more good things after posting school's first winning record.
88.	Louisiana Tech	WAC	4	Second-year coach Sonny Dykes should see results in passing game.
89.	Northern Illinois	MAC	3	Ex-Wisconsin asst. Dave Doeren takes over, puts in spread offense.
90.	UNLV	MWC	5	As coach Bobby Hauck says, Rebs are "dang young." But improving.
91.	Wyoming	MWC	6	Easier sked (opens with two FCS schools) will make record prettier.
92.	Marshall	C-USA	7	Second-year coach Doc Holliday's young team has matured.
93.	Ohio	MAC	4	That's 17 wins in past two seasons for Frank Solich's team.
94.	Colorado State	MWC	7	Soft non-conference schedule puts Rams in reach of minor bowl.
95.	Utah State	WAC	5	Some solid experience returns, but not quarterback Diondre Borel.
96.	Rice	C-USA	8	Only six wins in two years, but RB Sam McGuffie is a good one.
97.	Temple	MAC	5	Ex-Florida OC Steve Addazio takes over for moving-up Al Golden.
98.	Western Michigan	MAC	6	Junior QB Alex Carder is team's building block for next two years.
99.	Arkansas State	Sun Belt	3	Wolves have the talent to make a run at the conference title.
100.	Idaho	WAC	6	14 wins in past two seasons two more than in previous five years.
101.	Central Michigan	MAC	7	Just 3-9 last season; needs QB Ryan Radcliff to trim INT total.
102.	UTEP	C-USA	9	Five consecutive losing seasons put coach Mike Price in peril.
103.	La.-Monroe	Sun Belt	4	Veteran offense should have coach Todd Berry's spread figured out.
104.	Bowling Green	MAC	8	Offensive line struggled mightily in 1-7 conference season in 2010.
105.	Middle Tennessee	Sun Belt	5	Probably not going to make it back to a bowl for third time in a row.
106.	Tulane	C-USA	10	Bob Toledo (13-35 in four seasons) needs to win ... right now.
107.	Kent State	MAC	9	Former Ohio State assistant Darrell Hazell is new man in charge.
108.	Florida Atlantic	Sun Belt	6	Panthers open new campus stadium; play first five on the road.
109.	UAB	C-USA	11	Blazers trying to end streak of six consecutive losing seasons.
110.	Memphis	C-USA	12	Steep climb for program that was bad across the board last year.
111.	Buffalo	MAC	10	Defense takes a hit after 2-10 record in coach Jeff Quinn's debut.
112.	Louisiana	Sun Belt	7	Rickey Bustle failed to get to a bowl, so in comes Mark Hudspeth.
113.	Ball State	MAC	11	First-year coach Pete Lembo puts in a new no-huddle attack.
114.	Eastern Michigan	MAC	12	Coach Ron English only 2-22 with the Eagles in two seasons.
115.	New Mexico State	WAC	7	More experienced, but needs more offense to start climbing.
116.	North Texas	Sun Belt	8	Former Iowa State coach Dan McCarney takes over for Todd Dodge.
117.	Western Kentucky	Sun Belt	9	Some signs of progress ... and RB Bobby Rainey is really good.
118.	San Jose State	WAC	8	Injuries were devastating in the team's 1-12 finish last season.
119.	Akron	MAC	13	Second-year coach Rob Ianello has to do what he does best — recruit.
120.	New Mexico	MWC	8	Lobos hope to turn things around.

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Sept 11	LSU (-10) Vanderbilt	27-3	WON
Sept 13	Ravens (+1½) Jets	10-9	WON
Sept 26	Seahawks (+4½) Chargers	27-20	WON
Oct 1	Utah State (+4) BYU	31-16	WON
Oct 2	Oregon (-7) Stanford	52-31	WON
Oct 3	Browns (+3) Bengals	23-20	WON
Oct 16	Wisconsin (+4) Ohio State	31-18	WON
Oct 24	Seahawks (-7) Cardinals	22-10	WON
Oct 28	NC State (+4) Florida State	28-24	WON
Oct 31	Buccaneers (+3) Cardinals	38-35	WON
Nov 2	Ark. State (+1½) Middle Tenn.	51-24	WON
Nov 6	Kansas State (+3½) Texas	39-14	WON
Nov 6	Oklahoma State (-8½) Baylor	55-28	WON
Nov 6	Texas A&M (+3) Oklahoma	33-19	WON
Nov 14	Buccaneers (-7) Panthers	31-16	WON
Nov 15	Eagles (-3) Redskins	59-28	WON
Nov 21	Steelers (-7) Raiders	35-3	WON
Nov 27	Ohio State (-16½) Michigan	37-7	WON
Dec 12	Lions (+7) Packers	7-3	WON
Dec 13	Ravens/Texans (OVER 46)	34/28	WON
Dec 19	Bills (+5) Dolphins	17-14	WON
Dec 19	Jets (+4½) Steelers	22-17	WON
Dec 26	Redskins (+7) Jaguars	20-17	WON

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- **My September College Upset** **Won with Bowling Green (+3½) shocking Marshall 44-28 on Sept 18!** The fact Marshall had a veteran quarterback in Brian Anderson was obscuring the fact their offensive line was extremely young and they had problems at cornerback. Secondary problems in the pass-happy MAC are never to be overlooked. In the end Bowling Green won more decisively then even we had anticipated.
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CRAZY GOOD

The state of Alabama has college football wrapped around its ring finger, but has it sacrificed its sanity?

Rest of nation watches in fascination, horror and envy

By Dennis Dodd

Undra Billingsley

Photo by Jeff Gross/Getty Images

When exactly was college football locked out?

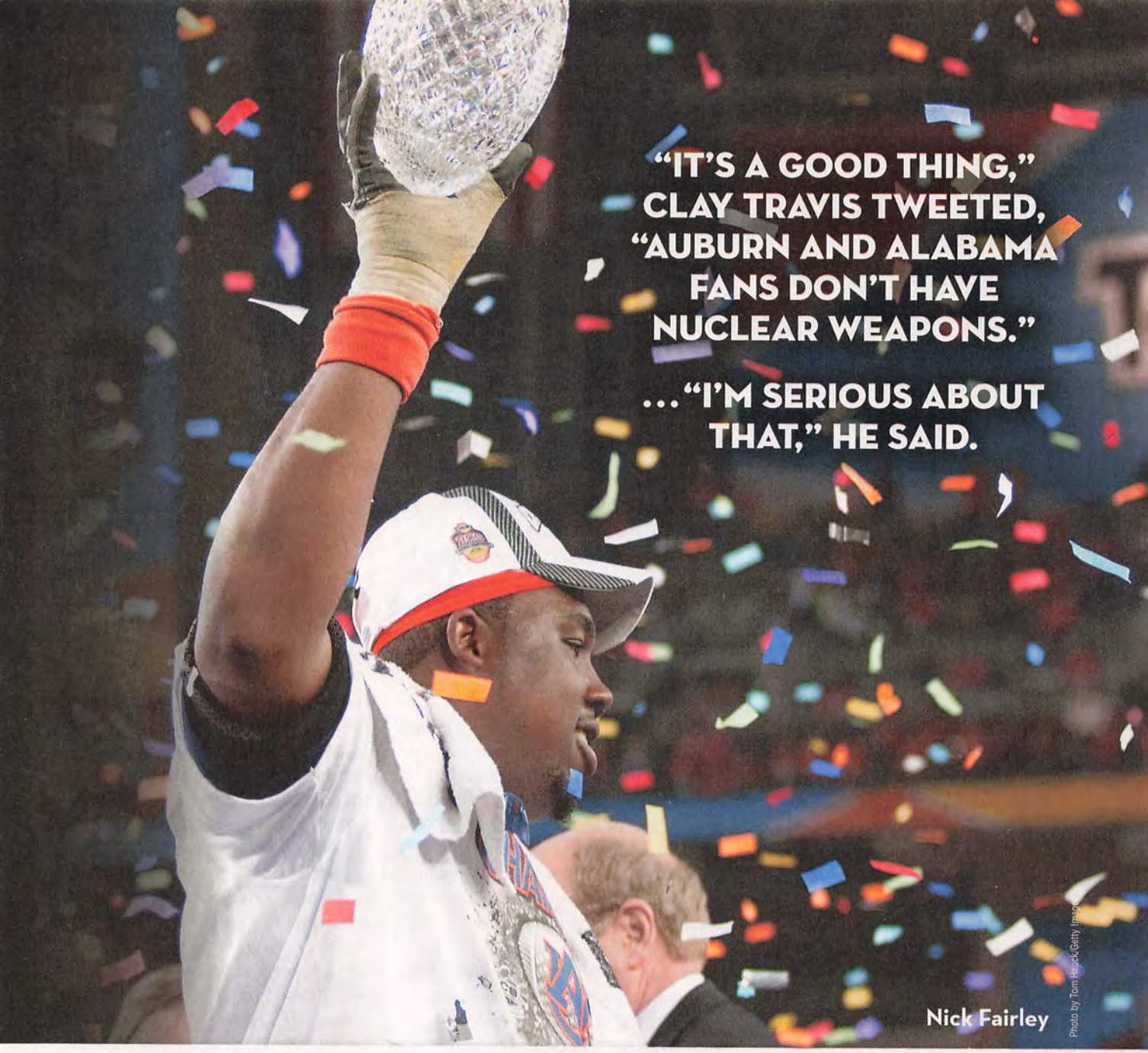
This isn't the kind of lockout NFL fans have had to deal with.

When did college football get to the point that the state of Alabama closed the borders and threw away the key?

When did the Sweet Home monopolize the sport to the point that any discussion about college football these days begins and ends in the passion pit wedged between Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee and Florida?

We always knew that the Deep South was a little north of crazy about football, but lately, well ... wow.

You might have noticed that Alabama



and Auburn have won the past two national championships. That had been achieved by different schools in the same state consecutively exactly once before in AP poll history.

Those schools also have produced the past two Heisman winners. Mark Ingram was Alabama's first winner in 2009. Auburn's Cam Newton dominated the race, and eventually the award, last season. For only the third time, players from different schools in the same state won consecutive Heismans.

A lot of games and hardware have been won lately, sure, but sometimes at the expense of sanity, decorum and dignity.

It used to be you had to be dead — or at least very retired — to get your own statue. But in the same April 2011 week, the University of Alabama dedicated a nine-foot bronze statue to its coach who had yet to enter his fifth season.

Not to be outdone, Auburn promised its own series of statues celebrating its three Heisman Trophy winners. All three — Pat Sullivan, Bo Jackson and Newton — are very much above ground.

The most recent Heisman winner was, as of spring, the subject of an NCAA investigation.

As the programs have become more equal on the field, something close to war broke out off of it. A nut-job Alabama fan allegedly poisoned a couple of 130-year old oak trees on the Auburn campus — the ones known for holding hundreds of rolls of toilet paper on Toomer's Corner after Tiger wins.

So seldom have the two schools been this nationally prominent together.

Maybe it's just us finally paying full attention.

Or maybe it really has never been this crazy.

"It's a good thing," Clay Travis tweeted, "Auburn and Alabama fans don't have nuclear weapons."

Travis is your average SEC fanatic — fanatics can be "average," yes? — and also an accomplished author and sportswriter who hosts a sports talk radio show in Knoxville. Naturally, that tweet merited a follow-up phone call to confirm that fear of nuclear capability.

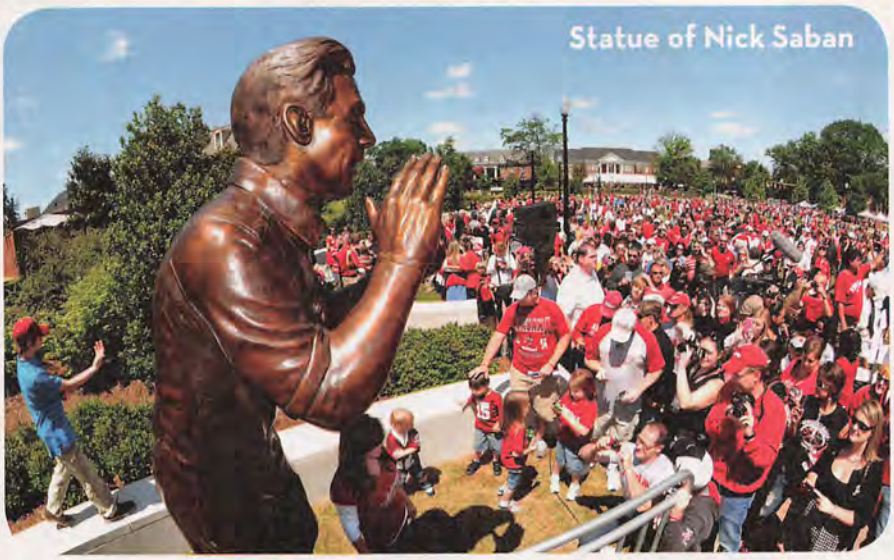

Statue of Nick Saban

Photo by Kelly Lambert-US PRESSWIRE

Photo by RD Moore

"I'm serious about that," he said.

FOR BETTER *AND* WORSE

Start with this: For the past two seasons, the state's been better than everyone else at football.

Gene Chizik was the controversial choice to replace Auburn's Tommy Tuberville in 2009. Controversial because he was coming off a 2-10 season at Iowa State. Chizik stabilized things with an 8-5 debut, using Alabama as the standard when he was hired.

Chizik brought in Trooper Taylor, noted sideline towel waver and, more importantly, veteran SEC recruiter. Chizik also convinced mad scientist Gus Malzahn to sign on as offensive coordinator.

By 2009, though, Nick Saban already had become the high priest of T-Town just by being Nick Saban, running his program like those top-secret NFL equivalents.

There is the "one voice" philosophy where only the head coach speaks for the program most of the time. The man is known for his defenses, which come from every angle. That defensive grit was summarized by one play in the 2010 BCS title game where defensive end Marcell Dareus took out Texas quarterback Colt McCoy on the game's fifth play.

Alabama won by 16.

In the eyes of Tide fans, the 5-8 Saban earned that nine-foot statue when he won Alabama's 13th national championship. Chizik then matched his rival, becoming the fifth coach since 2000 to win a national title within his first two seasons at a school. He somehow remains statue-less ... but, hey, the season doesn't start until September.

But after a season for the ages, Chizik found himself almost apologizing. Reasonable folks are still asking if the title was legit. As of late April, Auburn was the subject of at least three NCAA investigations.

The most famous probe had to do with Newton. A year after Tim Tebow had left the game, college football found another player worthy of the best-ever label.

But it wasn't that easy ...

Newton was declared ineligible for a day during the week of the Iron Bowl. That was before the NCAA determined the nation's best player was eligible basically because there was no bylaw to govern the fact that his father had solicited six figures from Mississippi State. A national debate sprang from there as an SEC title, the Heisman and a national championship followed.

"Auburn," the Birmingham News proclaimed, "is challenging for the worst offseason ever by a national champion."

"I don't feel like we have to defend our honor at all," Chizik said. "A lot of circumstances that happened over the last five or six months we had no control over because we weren't involved in any of it. We feel comfortable when we go to bed at night."

Elsewhere in this state, they sleep with one eye open. For better AND worse, the center of the college football now rests in Alabama until further notice.

CRAZIES RUNNING THE ASYLUM

As the parties move tentatively toward another fall in the South, the mortal consequences of the rivalry must be considered.

It was 62-year-old Harvey Updyke who allegedly poisoned those Toomer's Corner trees a few days before Auburn beat Oregon to win its second national championship. Then he went on national radio basically confessing to the crime, with his lawyer providing color commentary during what has become the daily clearinghouse for everything football in the Deep South — The Paul Finebaum Show.

"I don't want to go to my grave saying, 'Harvey the tree-poisoner,'" Updyke told Finebaum on the air. "I've done a lot of good things. That wasn't one of them. I would've been remembered as a great father, great grandfather."

Compelling words from a man who named one of his children "Crimson Tyde."

Even for those not immersed in the culture, after listening to such surreality, you don't know whether to laugh, cry or go eat bar-b-que.

"There is an unholy alliance," Travis said.

"The rivalry has gotten taken over by people who don't have an affiliation with either university. There are the people who went there, and the high school dropouts where this is 95 percent of their self esteem. There are so many brilliant SEC football fans. They get typecast by the crazies."

WHO'S GOING TO STOP THE STATE?

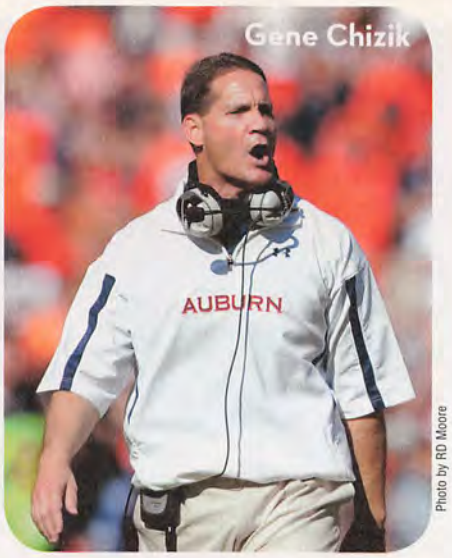
The football greatness will not soon end.

Auburn has some rebuilding to do, but Malzahn has established himself as one of the best. There is a reason he turned down a reportedly lucrative offer from Vanderbilt. The right head coaching job can wait. Malzahn is among the nation's highest-paid assistants after winning the Frank Broyles Award as Assistant Coach of the Year.

While the search for Newton's replacement continues, sophomore tailback Michael Dyer

Mark Ingram

Photo by RD Moore



Gene Chizik

Photo by RD Moore

— who broke Bo Jackson's school freshman rushing record — should be this season's go-to guy for the Tigers.

Alabama has preseason No. 1 expectations. The defense is back to the national-championship level of 2009, and tailback Trent Richardson is ready to make his own Heisman run after the departure of Ingram.

What does that mean for everybody else?

More of the same, most likely, with everyone looking up at the conference down South. You've probably noticed that Alabama and Auburn are part of five consecutive SEC national titles won by four different schools.

Depth is not an issue.

LSU won 11 games in an "off" year. Florida stuck it in Texas' eye, sparing no expense in replacing Urban Meyer with Horns' coach-in-waiting Will Muschamp. Offensive coordinator Charlie Weis joined him, coming back to college to become the highest-paid assistant in Florida history. Steve Spurrier, now 66, oversees the defending SEC East champs at South Carolina.

Meanwhile ...

We're wondering when L.A. football is going to matter again. USC and UCLA finished below .500 combined (12-13) in 2010. That hadn't happened since 2000. USC is working its way out of a crippling NCAA probation. Depth remains an issue and will for some time thanks to scholarship limits. Rick Neuheisel simply hasn't done the job at UCLA, and the Bruins have become what you absolutely cannot be in Los Angeles: Boring.

Texas is rebuilding in the scaled-down Big 12, while Oklahoma, winner of seven conference titles under Bob Stoops, looks to be ready to dominate the league. Again.

The Big Ten's best team, Ohio State, dealt in the offseason with the ethical issues of coach Jim Tressel. The Buckeyes will be without Tressel and five key players for the first five games of the season, perhaps dooming a national title run.

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

It is inevitable, then, that the NCAA tour bus also circles back through Alabama where the reward has outweighed the risk in seasons past. Auburn is tied for third all-time with seven major infractions cases. Alabama leads Division I-A since 1995 with four.

"It's insane down there right now," Travis said. "It's kind of the dark side of the growth of college athletics. The interest level has never been higher, but the danger level has never been higher."

Sadly, violence seems to be the next logical development, mostly because it has happened in the past.

In 1974, a woman *shot and killed a man* in Chattanooga, Tenn., following an argument over an Iron Bowl field goal.

In 2005, a cage fighter with Alabama leanings rolled by an Auburn frat the night before the Iron Bowl and yelled "Roll Tide." He was accused of inciting a riot.

The examples don't matter much now that dread is back in the air. In the immediate aftermath of the vandalism against Auburn there were cops guarding Bear Bryant's grave. There are existing surveillance cameras trained on 'Bama's "Walk of Champions," home to Saban's statute and those of four other national championship coaches.

A funny thing happened, though, on the way to Alabama Armageddon. On some level, the two fan bases became ... closer.

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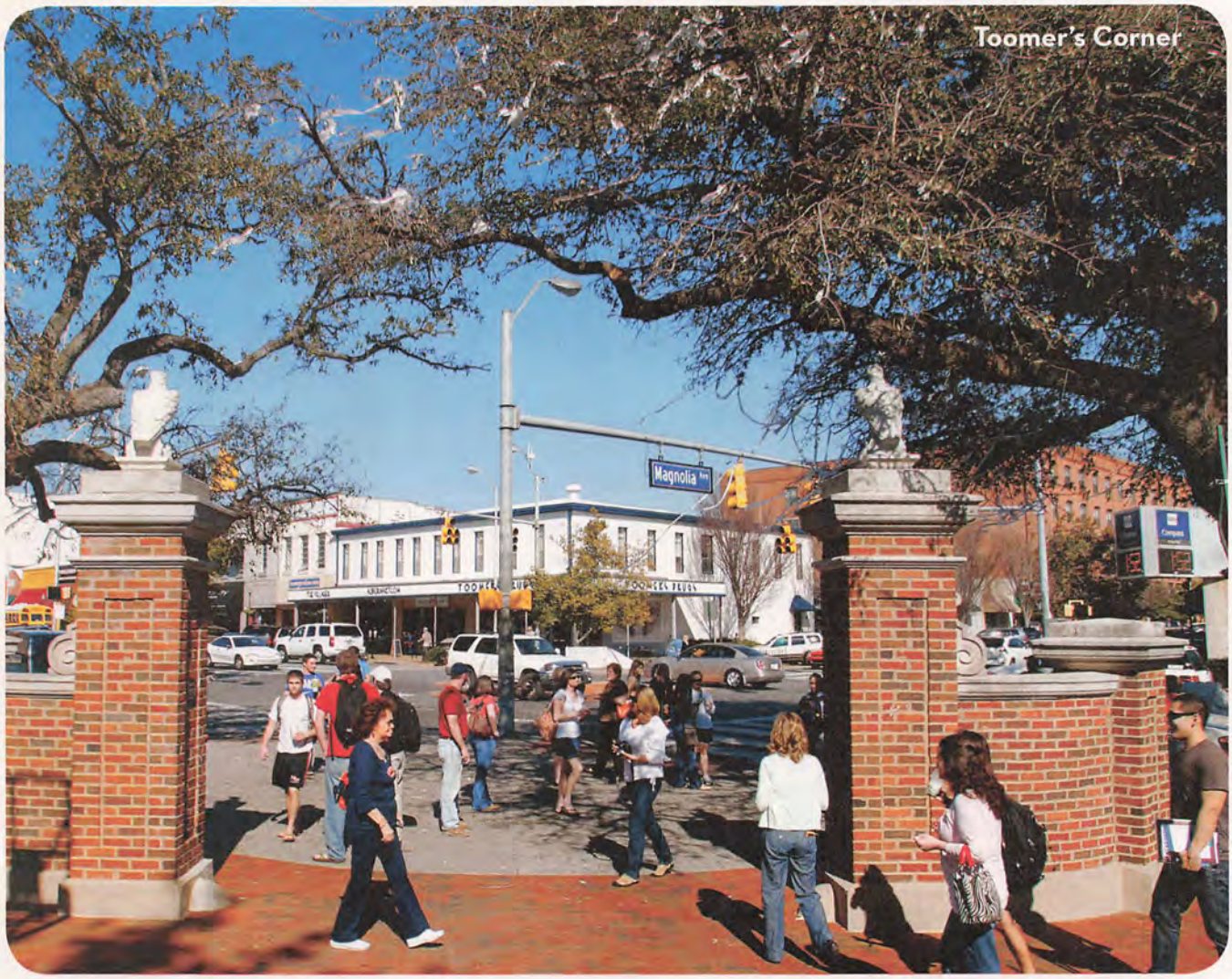

Photo by Mike Haskey/Columbus Ledger-Enquirer/MCT via Getty Images

"I was mortified to be candid with you," said Gina Smith, a member of Tide For Toomer's, a grassroots organization of Alabama grads who reached out to Auburn after the poisoning. "I think there is a silent majority of fans at both schools who are able to keep this rivalry in perspective. This was absolutely taking it too far."

Shortly after the poisoning, Tide For Toomer's donated $50,000 to Auburn. The money was applied to the landscaping work needed to attempt to save the trees.

"Who kills trees, especially those two trees?" said Scott Enebak, a professor in Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife sciences. "Someone who really wasn't thinking right, I guess. He hit the Auburn fans where it would hurt the most."

Just four years earlier, Auburn had completed its sixth consecutive Iron Bowl win against Alabama. Two years after that, Saban and Alabama broke through for the school's first title in 17 years.

With the addition of Newton, little brother then won it all for the first time since 1957. Along the way, Auburn's Newton-led rally from a 24-0 deficit *in Tuscaloosa* to win the 2010 Iron Bowl is now burned into Bama's senses like an embarrassing tattoo every Tide fan woke up with.

"It was a terrible feeling," said Alabama offensive lineman Barrett Jones, "a terrible feeling that we didn't reach our potential, most of all. It was good that it left a bad taste in our mouth. It's motivation for next season."

Yes, it can be argued that Auburn-Alabama relations have never been more strained. That's part of the problem. The arguments never stop. Alabama can't stand Auburn, and Auburn, it seems, can't stand success.

It had taken about half as long for Saban to get his own statue at Alabama (16 months), as it did for him to win the title (in his third season at the school). So they cried — yes, there were actual tears from fans — as the Saban statue was unveiled.

Now it seems as if 'Bama is overdue for another national championship. That's the expectation every year.

"It shows that deep down South we've got something that's really great," Alabama receiver Brandon Gibson said.

Or something terribly scary, undignified and strange.

Whatever pleases Alabama, grinds Auburn and vice versa. It shows in both coaches who stiffen when the accomplishments of the other are brought up.

"I feel like we're blessed to be a part of great football in this state," Chizik said.

"It just means there's two really good programs here," Saban added.

The Sweet Home isn't sharing anytime soon.

Dennis Dodd is a senior writer for CBSSports.com covering national college football.

CHEATERS NEVER PROSPER?

NCAA PRESIDENT MUST MAKE TOUGHER STAND

Mark Emmert

Photo by Nick Laham/Getty Images

It was suggested to NCAA president Mark Emmert during the offseason that this might be some sort of tipping point in the history of cheating.

More than one observer had concluded that college athletics has never been dirtier. The week Emmert was approached, HBO had just televised interviews with four former Auburn players who said they had taken cash from boosters and/or coaches.

Already in the NCAA investigative pipeline were unethical conduct cases involving Jim Tressel and former Tennessee basketball coach Bruce Pearl. This year's Final Four bracket could have been divided up between the White Hats (VCU and Butler) and Black Hats (UConn and Kentucky).

Both Jim Calhoun and John Calipari had NCAA Tournament appearances vacated in THE SAME YEAR (1996) ... and Calhoun will be suspended for three games next season.

Didn't it bother Emmert that both teams in the BCS title game — Oregon *AND* Auburn — were under NCAA investigation during the offseason?

"There is nothing to indicate that's anything other than happenstance," said Emmert, the former LSU and Washington CEO who has been on the job less than a year.

Happenstance? And we had such high hopes for you, Mark.

No, what has occurred lately is not because of some random cosmic convergence. It is proof again that until risk outweighs reward, cheaters will prosper. And there are plenty of cheaters lately. A championship gained by any means is still a championship, it seems.

Do USC fans think any less of the 2004 title that was vacated by the Football Writers Association of America? That same title was being reviewed for potential revocation by BCS commissioners in the spring. The Cam Newton situation was so unique that the NCAA couldn't find a bylaw to fit what his father had done — reportedly solicit six figures in exchange for Cam's services from Mississippi State.

Being the NCAA president has little official power except to use his bully pulpit and, to be fair, Emmert's being on the job less than a year is still a valid excuse. The man inherited a lot of sludge. But we need him, we need *someone*, to put things right.

"It's absolutely critical that we get our arms around the integrity issues rapidly," Emmert said.

Some of it isn't even the NCAA's fault. The public doesn't realize that the enforcement department, made up of approximately 45 investigators, can't possibly keep up with the workload. Without direct help from the NFL and NFLPA, the sleazy agent issue may be out of control. Those agent runners aren't going away for the same reason the guy in the nosebleed section is willing to pay three figures for a scalped ticket on Saturdays.

Money drives everything.

"You've got to make sure you're conducting enforcement in a way that provides some sort of constructive fear and a probability of being caught," Emmert said.

But how? Until that risk outweighs the reward, it seems that nothing will change. Those suspensions obviously haven't shamed Calhoun and Tressel. The work on closing the loophole that allowed Newton to play — and win the SEC, the Heisman and national championship — was still in the works late in the spring.

Third parties are an emerging threat to take over football. Basketball, it should be noted, already is a lost cause in that respect, perhaps making it time to drop that death penalty A-bomb once again.

In January, Emmert himself felt threatened enough by angry Kentucky fans to use bodyguards during the annual NCAA convention. Those fans felt justified making death threats because recruit Enes Kanter had been declared permanently ineligible.

"I really can't quote them without having them bleeped out," Emmert said.

The Fiesta Bowl's own in-house report peeled back the layers on years of blatant financial corruption.

"Utterly unacceptable," Emmert said.

This is not his mess — not all of it, at least — yet.

But before anything changes, the attitude of the NCAA president has to be adjusted.

This is not happenstance.

PRESSING 'PAUSE'

But Urban Meyer, College Football's Top Free Agent in 2011, won't be idle

By Dennis Dodd

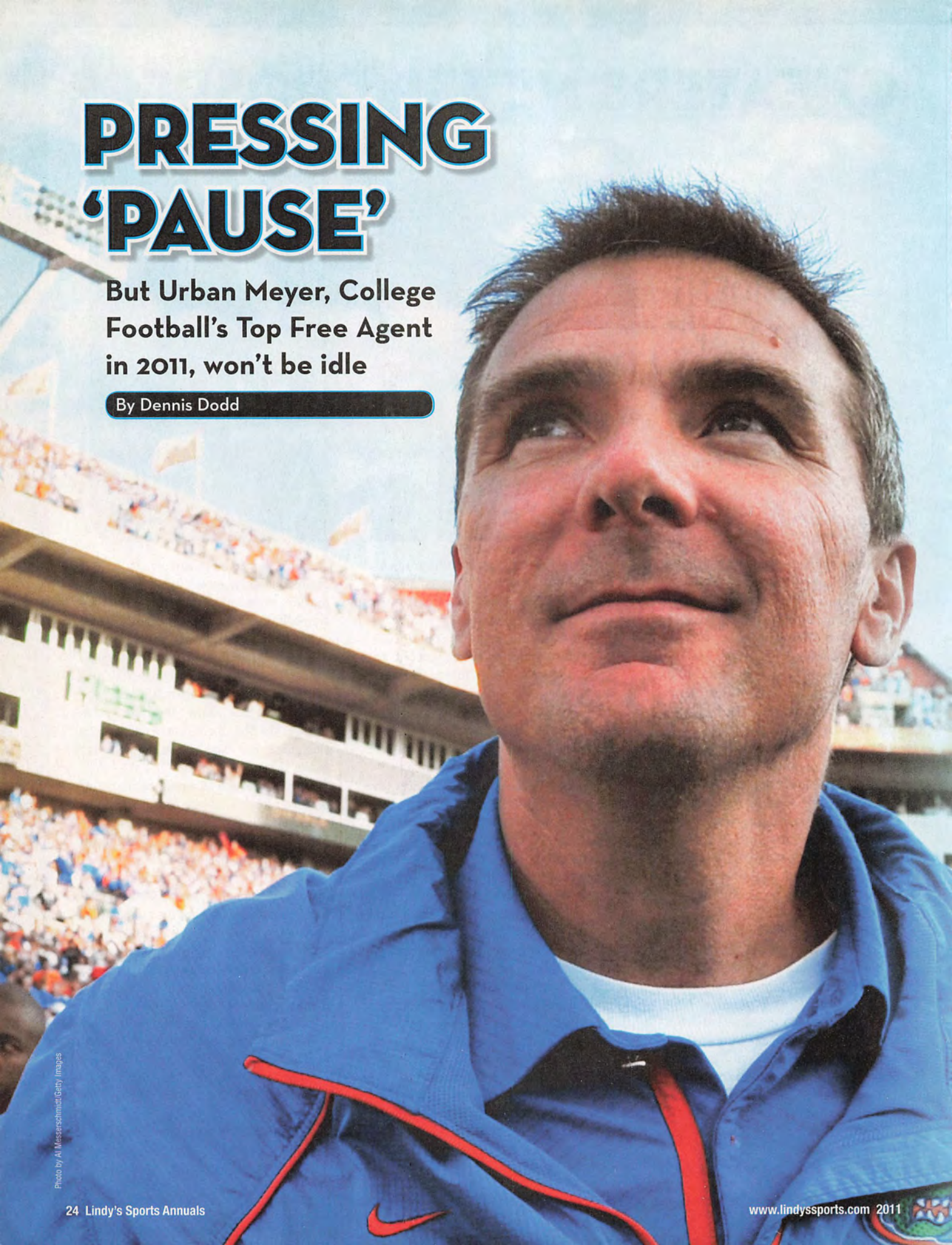

Photo by Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images

He's coming back. You know that. Heck, Urban Meyer is almost screaming it.

"I won't tell you that you won't see him coaching again because I think someday he will," said one of Urb's best friends, Utah coach Kyle Whittingham. "He's too good a coach not to."

So that's not the issue. As Meyer takes this season "off" — at least at last notice — we're all wondering how long it will take him to get back to coaching. And with whom. Notre Dame? Ohio State? Those are good places to start the discussion if, ahem, those jobs ever open.

In case you missed it, Meyer left Florida for the second time in less than a year in early December. This time the resignation stuck, at least so far. Meyer, 46, cited health reasons. There is no reason to doubt him, but you have to take the guy for what he is — a ball coach sometimes as contradictory off the field as he is brilliant on it.

The man who once berated a reporter at practice is now a member of that same media horde. You'll get your fill of him this fall as an ESPN college football analyst.

Isn't that the place where all coaches-in-waiting go to keep their name out there? Yes, but first there is a legacy to address.

In the prime of his career, Meyer left behind a couple of national championships and a 104-23 record in 10 years as a head coach. He's enriched every place he's been.

In his two seasons, Bowling Green went 17-6. Meyer set the stage for his replacement Gregg Brandon to win the MAC West in 2003. Utah might not be in the Pac-12 had Meyer not taken a sleepy Mountain West program and made it the original BCS buster in 2004.

"It started with his first team meeting," said Morgan Scalley, Utah's safeties coach and recruiting coordinator.

Back then, Scalley was a wide-eyed, hard-hitting defensive back at Utah wondering about the new guy. Meyer had sorted through four or five offers to leave Bowling Green but settled on Utah because of the possibilities.

Facilities, following and skiing. His wife, Shelley, liked that.

Scalley and his teammates were told in that first meeting with the new coach that there were only about eight teams in the country that did everything right — special teams, offense, defense, offseason program.

"We're going to be one of those eight teams," Meyer said.

Upon Meyer's departure for Florida, the Utes had won 23 of 25 games in two years and established themselves as a Top 25 program.

"I loved it. I loved his attitude. I loved his confidence," Scalley said. "At the time you're thinking to yourself, 'This is a team that just went 5-6 (in 2002), wasn't going to a bowl game.' At the same time, I loved the energy, I loved the passion."

The journey from there to the Pac-12 has been — in college football terms — a mere shotgun snap. It's not just a new conference for Utah, but a new era and arguably the biggest moment in the university's 160-year history.

In his "in between" period, Meyer also has become something of an NCAA watchdog. During a February radio interview, he dropped this bomb:

"What I've seen the last five years is a complete turn in the integrity of the college coaching profession."

And he means it. If the NCAA hasn't talked to him already, it should. Meyer is willing to cooperate. This is a guy who operated inside the SEC recruiting vortex. This is a guy who was criticized, by some, after Cam Newton "got away."

Meyer can't say it for the record, but there were issues that caused Newton to leave for Auburn. The alleged stolen laptop. The reported academic fraud that had Newton headed for the door when a Florida academic committee was about to come after him.

How much unethical conduct did Meyer run into while he was coaching?

"Things would come to light and the protocol was to turn them in to the compliance office," Meyer said.

"I felt a responsibility to my staff. Violations would occur and our staff would not hear the result or a punishment. The school who committed the violation would be allowed to continue to recruit and sign the player. That did not make sense.

"What happens is there's 10 percent, 20 percent of things that are done the wrong way," he added. "The majority are still done the right way. I was outspoken about it. I was very concerned about it. I'm still concerned."

So what's it like being a whistle blower outside of the ropes? Frankly, Meyer doesn't care. What we're seeing is that accountability he instilled at Utah and Florida. It's that drive that will make him desirable when he decides to get out from behind the microphone.

It's not too crass to suggest that Meyer could be back in the game, quickly.

He has a history in South Bend. Meyer, a former Irish assistant, has repeatedly referred to Notre Dame as his "dream job." It was ND that was ready to throw a lot of bank at Meyer before Florida landed first in Salt Lake City after the 2004 season.

Of course, Notre Dame might already have the right man in second-year coach Brian Kelly.

Meanwhile, Ohio State may take care of itself. Jim Tressel, with school lawyers in tow, has a mid-August meeting with the NCAA infractions committee. Tressel already is suspended for the first five games of this season for allegedly hiding those emails from his bosses. If the NCAA brings the wood in penalizing the program, how much worth will there be in keeping Tressel long-term?

Meyer already is tanned, rested and ready. Reducing the stress has already been a health enhancer.

He'll be back coaching because coaches are addicts, all of them. Bobby Bowden kept chasing one more title before Florida State unceremoniously kicked him out. Chris Ault has been coach at Nevada *three* times. He reached his ultimate high in 2010, leading the Wolf Pack to 13 wins, including an upset victory over Boise State and the school's first Top 25 ranking since the 1940s.

The addiction can be a killer. There are a handful of places in the country where a coach is pretty much guaranteed to win. Florida and Texas are two of them. Last season those schools became the biggest disappointments in college football.

Mack Brown retooled his staff at Texas. Meyer is retooling his life.

For that, we should admire him until it's time for him to get back inside the ropes.

COACHING FREE AGENTS

Will these guys be back on the sideline in 2012?

Name	Last job	Career record
Mike Bellotti	Oregon	116-55
Tommy Bowden	Clemson	90-49
Mike Leach	Texas Tech	84-43
Mark Mangino	Kansas	50-48
Rich Rodriguez	Michigan	118-76

Mike Bellotti

Photo by Donald Miralle/Getty Images

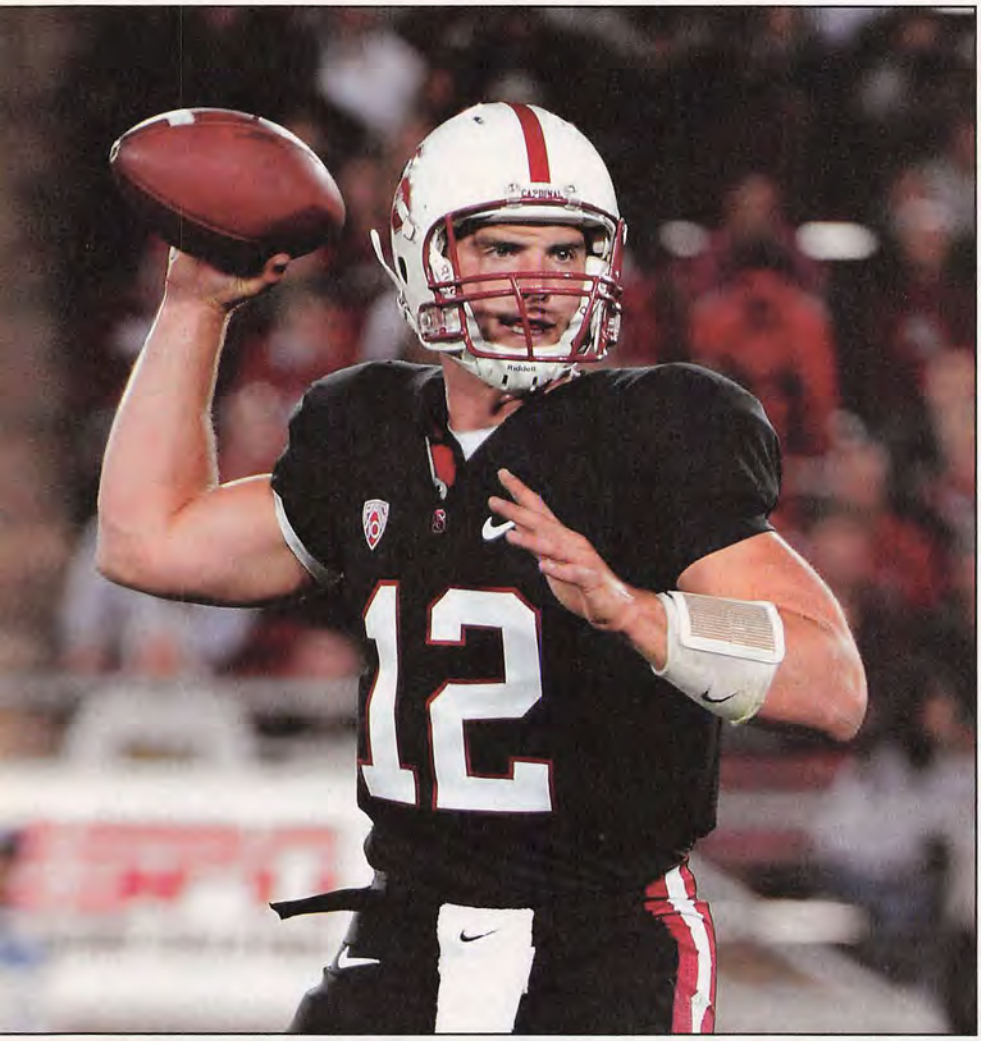

Photo by Kyle Terada-US PRESSWIRE

Poise, leadership, arm, smarts: It's all Luck

By Jon Wilner

Rob Rang has been in the football scouting business for many years, and for much of that time LaDainian Tomlinson and Carson Palmer occupied the top of his all-time list of top prospects.

Then Ndamukong Suh came along and forced Rang to reshuffle his pantheon.

Then Rang took a hard look at Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck — studied film, watched him in person, studied more film — and declared Luck the best player he had scouted.

Ever.

"You like the size and the arm strength and the accuracy; all those things are Pro Bowl caliber," said Rang, who works for CBSSports.com.

"He has all the physical attributes, but a lot of quarterbacks over the years have had a rare blend of physical attributes. I've never seen a quarterback with the mental and physical attributes at his capacity."

That combination — in addition to Luck's 20-5 record as a starter — makes him the clear choice as *Lindy's* 2011 preseason Offensive Player of the Year.

The 6-4, 235-pound junior, who finished second in the Heisman Trophy voting and led Stanford to an Orange Bowl victory, would have been the top pick in the NFL Draft in April. Instead, he returned for his junior season to pursue the national championship and his undergraduate degree.

As for any second guessing, Luck has none.

"I'm very happy," he said.

Stanford's opponents are not.

Nor are teams with an eye on the national title ... or players with designs on the Heisman..

Nor, for that matter, are the Carolina Panthers, who owned the No. 1 pick but were denied the chance to take the best quarterback prospect to enter the draft in years.

"Seeing him live, I'm blown away," NFL analyst Ron Jaworski said after watching Luck during an Orange Bowl workout.

"He looks, acts and carries himself like an NFL quarterback. He exudes leadership. He's NFL-ready. He's as sound a quarterback as anyone I've seen. He throws a tight spiral, has flawless mechanics and an array of throws."

Luck even has NFL genes. His father, Oliver, was a reserve quarterback for the Houston Oilers in the mid-1980s. Oliver taught his son the game at an early age. In addition to Luck's strong arm, he showed an instant aptitude for the game.

"He knows where everybody is; he knows about timing; he knows about anticipation," Oregon State coach Mike Riley said. "With Oliver, (Andrew) probably was a quarterback from the time he was very young, and those genes passed on very well."

Oliver was an NFL Europe executive, but the family returned to the United States and Andrew developed into a five-star prospect at Houston's Stratford High School. With scholarship offers from more than 20 colleges, he picked Stanford because of the academics and coach Jim Harbaugh's experience playing the position in the NFL.

After redshirting in his first year, Luck took command of the offense

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

in 2009 and combined with tailback Toby Gerhart to lead Stanford to eight wins.

Then Gerhart headed to the NFL and Luck blossomed into the best pro-style quarterback in the country: He had a passer rating of 170.2, enough mobility to break off two 50-yard runs and a feel for the position that left NFL scouts drooling.

"It's amazing watching him and what he's able to do before the snap," USC coach Lane Kiffin said.

"They change so many plays and protections. He's so smart and so prepared and able to run when things aren't open. The NFL scouts that come through here say his marks are off the charts and that he's an absolute no-brainer."

But a few days after leading Stanford to victory in the Orange Bowl, Luck announced he would return to Stanford — a decision that surprised the football world but not anyone inside the Cardinal program. Luck made it clear throughout the season that he enjoyed school, felt no pressure (financial or otherwise) to enter the draft and wanted his degree in architectural design.

Instantly, he became the 2012 Heisman favorite, and Stanford became a contender for the Pac-12 and national titles — even though it lost three starting offensive linemen, both starting receivers and Harbaugh.

But the transition has been smooth. First-year coach David Shaw was Stanford's offensive coordinator under Harbaugh and kept the playbook intact. New quarterbacks coach Pep Hamilton worked with the Stanford receivers last season as has a good relationship with Luck.

"They've done a great job really being on our butts about coming out every day with a purpose," Luck said. "I think I've grown a lot personally."

That's not what Stanford's opponents wanted to hear.

"We're asking Andrew to take the next step," Shaw said. "We're asking him to be the player he was last year and even more of a leader and take even more control of the offense. He's taken that responsibility and run with it."

OFFENSE

Andrew Luck

LaMichael James

Marcus Lattimore

Justin Blackmon

Ryan Broyles

Michael Egnew

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Andrew Luck	6-4	235	Jr.	Stanford
RB	LaMichael James	5-9	185	Jr.	Oregon
RB	Marcus Lattimore	6-0	231	So.	South Carolina
WR	Justin Blackmon	6-1	211	Jr.	Oklahoma State
WR	Ryan Broyles	5-11	187	Sr.	Oklahoma
TE	Michael Egnew	6-6	240	Sr.	Missouri
C	Mike Brewster	6-5	293	Sr.	Ohio State
OL	Barrett Jones	6-5	311	Jr.	Alabama
OL	Nate Potter	6-6	300	Sr.	Boise State
OL	Matt Reynolds	6-6	322	Sr.	BYU
OL	Levy Adcock	6-6	322	Sr.	Oklahoma State
PK	Blair Walsh	5-10	185	Sr.	Georgia

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Kellen Moore	6-0	191	Sr.	Boise State
RB	Trent Richardson	5-11	224	Jr.	Alabama
RB	Knile Davis	6-0	230	Jr.	Arkansas
WR	Alshon Jeffery	6-4	233	Jr.	South Carolina
WR	Jeff Fuller	6-4	215	Sr.	Texas A&M
TE	George Bryan	6-5	265	Sr.	NC State
C	David Molk	6-2	288	Sr.	Michigan
OL	David DeCastro	6-5	310	Jr.	Stanford
OL	Jonathan Martin	6-6	304	Jr.	Stanford
OL	Mike Adams	6-8	300	Sr.	Ohio State
OL	Kelechi Osemele	6-6	354	Sr.	Iowa State
PK	Danny Hrapmann	5-9	160	Jr.	Southern Miss

Mike Brewster

Barrett Jones

Nate Potter

Matt Reynolds

Levy Adcock

Blair Walsh

Photo by Rick Scuteri-US PRESSWIRE

ASU's Burfict is Different, but Hits Will Feel the Same

By Doug Haller

The drill was fast-paced and intense, Arizona State linebackers coach Trent Bray instructing his players: move right and left, front and back.

Still, when he had a chance, Vontaze Burfict tried to lighten the mood. "Coach Bray, can I be your Facebook friend?" Burfict asked his position coach.

"No," Bray shot back, not missing a beat.

Burfict chuckled, then took his turn, darting in all directions.

Through 15 spring practices, this brief exchange might have been the biggest Burfict-related disruption, a change from previous seasons when the junior middle linebacker occasionally delivered a late hit or shove, just to stir things up or remind everyone he was the baddest guy on the field.

By all accounts, Burfict is a different player this year.

No, he hasn't lost his intensity, and yes, he'll probably continue to earn a personal foul or two. But he's matured, dedicating himself to off-season workouts, trying his best to become a leader ... and to the rest of the Pac-12, that qualifies as a major disruption.

Put simply, this is Burfict's time, his year to trade potential for domination, which makes him *Lindy's* choice for Preseason Defensive Player of the Year.

"Vontaze is the biggest leader we have on the field defensively," senior defensive tackle Bo Moos said.

"I see him as someone who really has made the transition mentally to where he needs to be to be the best in the country, because that's what he is. He's the best linebacker at this level."

Coach Dennis Erickson says Burfict, at 6-3, 253 pounds, is in the best shape of his career. He got by mostly on talent his first season, enough to become the Pac-10's Defensive Freshman of the Year. But last year, Burfict noticed talent wasn't enough, particularly during a September game at Wisconsin.

"That's when it really hit me," he said. "I was like, 'OK, I just can't rely on my talent. Sometimes I need strength to deal with these guys.'"

Each spring, Arizona State recognizes those who excel in the weight room with its Hard Hat program. Last year, the Sun Devils honored 48 players, a group that included back-ups, walk-ons and even the kicker.

Burfict wasn't among them.

"He'd work out last year, but there were days if he didn't feel like it, he wouldn't show up," Bray said.

This year, Burfict didn't miss a single session, shedding seven pounds and earning his first Hard Hat award. He also worked with cornerback Omar Bolden to bring Arizona State's linebackers and defensive backs together for a joint film session, something that hadn't happened in previous seasons.

"Maturity," Erickson said when asked about the change in Burfict.

"Teammates challenging him to be

what he is. Don't be somebody you're not. Be what you are, a great football player. A guy that people want to follow. So do it, and he has. I think the light came on at the end of last year."

As great as this sounds, it's simply the first step. Burfict also has to figure out how to control his emotions, an issue that has cost the Sun Devils.

In last season's loss at Oregon State, he head-butted Beavers quarterback Ryan Katz, drawing a personal foul, an act that prompted Erickson to bench him for the first quarter of the next week's game at Washington.

As the season progressed, Burfict thought officials began targeting him, just waiting for an opportunity to throw a yellow flag.

"I came up to (one official) before the game (and said), 'What' s up? I'm Vontaze. Nice to meet you,'" Burfict said. "And he was like, 'Yeah, I know about you. I'll be looking at your number the rest of the game. You better not do anything stupid.' I was like, 'Whoa, OK.'"

It's an interesting dilemma. Burfict's aggressiveness is what makes him effective — "probably the scariest player in the country," one television analyst said last season — but it's hard to turn off. And it's earned him a reputation.

"I don't think people understand sometimes what (his performance) means to a team," sophomore defensive end Junior Onyeali said. "Those big hits ... he'll make certain plays that make you just say, 'Wow,' and those kinds of things just boost up the defense's confidence."

Burfict insists he's not worried about the past. He's simply focused on his future, on getting in the best shape possible and leading a defense that should rank among the best in the Pac-12, one that could land Arizona State in a bowl game for the first time since the 2007 season.

"I've never been around a more talented linebacker," said Bray. "Physically, the things he's able to do for as big as he is, it's impressive. If he's focused and has his mind on something, there's nothing he can't accomplish."

DEFENSE

Brandon Jenkins

Quinton Coples

Devin Taylor

Jared Crick

Vontaze Burfict

Luke Kuechly

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Brandon Jenkins	6-3	258	Jr.	Florida State
DL	Quinton Coples	6-6	245	Sr.	North Carolina
DL	Devin Taylor	6-7	248	Jr.	South Carolina
DL	Jared Crick	6-6	285	Sr.	Nebraska
LB	Vontaze Burfict	6-3	253	Jr.	Arizona State
LB	Luke Kuechly	6-3	235	Jr.	Boston College
LB	Dont'a Hightower	6-4	260	Sr.	Alabama
DB	Cliff Harris	5-11	165	Jr.	Oregon
DB	Jayron Hosley	5-10	170	Jr.	Virginia Tech
DB	Stephon Gilmore	6-1	194	So.	South Carolina
DB	Mark Barron	6-2	218	Sr.	Alabama
P	Quinn Sharp	6-1	189	Jr.	Oklahoma State

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Bruce Irvin	6-3	235	Sr.	West Virginia
DL	Vinny Curry	6-5	242	Sr.	Marshall
DL	Jacquies Smith	6-4	255	Sr.	Missouri
DL	Billy Winn	6-4	295	Sr.	Boise State
LB	Travis Lewis	6-2	233	Sr.	Oklahoma
LB	Lavonte David	6-1	220	Sr.	Nebraska
LB	Tank Carder	6-3	237	Sr.	TCU
DB	Alfonzo Dennard	5-10	205	Sr.	Nebraska
DB	Shaun Prater	5-11	180	Sr.	Iowa
DB	Keith Tandy	5-10	198	Sr.	West Virginia
DB	Robert Lester	6-2	210	Jr.	Alabama
P	Drew Butler	6-2	203	Sr.	Georgia

Dont'a Hightower

Cliff Harris

Jayron Hosley

Stephon Gilmore

Mark Barron

Quinn Sharp

PLAYER RATINGS

QUARTERBACKS

Boise State ready for Moore. Everybody else? Probably not.

Kellen Moore's final season as the Boise State quarterback will be nothing like his first three.

New offensive coordinator. New receivers. New conference. Unprecedented hype. More critics.

And the opportunity of a lifetime, with his brother Kirby likely to serve as one of his primary receiving targets.

Of course, the unflappable Moore — a Heisman Trophy finalist in 2010 and one of the favorites in 2011 — isn't fazed.

KELLEN MOORE

Photo by Otto Kitsinger III/Getty Images

"There's some excitement, maybe a little sense of urgency," Moore said.

Moore has built one of the most impressive resumes in college football history in the past three years, all as the Broncos' starter. He is 38-2 with a one-point loss and an overtime loss, leading the Broncos to wins in the 2010 Fiesta Bowl and 2010 MAACO Bowl Las Vegas. He has won three conference titles.

Last year, he led the nation with a pass-efficiency rating of 182.63. He needs eight wins to become the winningest quarterback in college football history.

But living up to the standard he has set will be difficult in 2011, given the wholesale changes to Moore's surroundings. Consider:

• Offensive coordinator Bryan Harsin left for Texas. Former wide receivers coach Brent Pease replaced him and will run the same scheme, but with his own spin.

• Top wideouts Titus Young and Austin Pettis were NFL Draft picks after combining for 53 touchdown catches in the past three years. Their replacements are largely unproven, with the exception of senior Tyler Shoemaker.

"We've just got to work together constantly," Moore said, "and get each other on the same page, and then everything will be just fine."

One of those receivers should mesh with Moore quickly. Kirby Moore, a sophomore, made 21 catches as a true freshman in 2009 but redshirted in 2010, when he would have been a role player in a crowded rotation.

"It'll be fun," Kellen said. "I don't think too many people get this opportunity, and we need to take advantage of it."

• The Broncos move into the Mountain West Conference this season. Utah and BYU are gone, but the Broncos still must deal with TCU — Moore hasn't thrown a touchdown pass in two previous meetings against the Horned Frogs — and Air Force.

• The college football media has celebrated Moore (6-0, 191 pounds) throughout his career. That likely will change slightly this year, as the focus shifts from his tremendous success in college to his readiness for the NFL.

"(Size) is always the topic when it comes to the numbers part of it," Pease said, "but when it comes to drafting guys, if you want a guy who's a winner, draft the winner. Don't worry about the size."

• Moore has faced lofty expectations in the past two seasons. In both cases, he played better than the year before.

But as a returning Heisman finalist, the pressure to perform at an elite level has never been greater.

And with all the changes — particularly at receiver, where he had built an almost automatic connection with Young on the deep ball and received some help from the rangy Pettis on marginal throws — the idea of matching last year's stats seems almost preposterous.

Moore completed a school-record 71.3 percent of his passes and topped 70 percent in 10 of his past 11 games.

No one expects the level-headed Moore to become stat-crazed.

Fortunately for the Broncos, there's one thing that hasn't changed this year: Moore.

"He really doesn't get too high and he doesn't get too low — ever," BSU coach Chris Petersen said. "He's just always the same. Really, if you could design a quarterback in terms of their demeanor, I think he's got exactly what you want."

— Chadd Cripe

TOP QUARTERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Andrew Luck** Few can understand why he came back ... college fans just happy he did.	Jr.	Stanford
2.	**Kellen Moore** Beautiful timing and so efficient -- a passer rating of 182.63 last season.	Sr.	Boise State
3.	**Landry Jones** With so many targets, he'll approach (surpass?) 4,718 yards, 38 TDs again.	Jr.	Oklahoma
4.	**Denard Robinson** Needs more pocket presence in new offense, but so dang electric.	Jr.	Michigan
5.	**Brandon Weeden** 27-year-old former minor-league pitcher tossed for 4,277 yards in 2010.	Sr.	Oklahoma State
6.	**Ryan Lindley** Tall, pro-style passer has 9,537 career passing yards as three-year starter.	Sr.	San Diego State
7.	**Robert Griffin** Can do it all; would be Heisman candidate if he wore, say, an Auburn jersey.	Jr.	Baylor
8.	**Darron Thomas** Hard to compare him to others, but read-option whiz perfect for Ducks.	Jr.	Oregon
9.	**Dan Persa** First-team All-Big Ten in 2010 despite missing final two games (Achilles').	Sr.	Northwestern
10.	**Case Keenum** Back after ACL injury to resume pursuit of NCAA career passing record.	Sr.	Houston
11.	**Matt Barkley** Showed better maturity, conditioning and down-field passing in 2010.	Jr.	USC
12.	**Nick Foles** Thrives in hurry-up, late-game situations and has loads of targets.	Sr.	Arizona
13.	**Kirk Cousins** Expected to have more freedom to turn it loose down field this season.	Sr.	Michigan State
14.	**Aaron Murray** Plenty of room to improve on 3,049-yard freshman season	So.	Georgia
15.	**Terrelle Pryor** Where to put a player suspended for five games? We split the difference.	Sr.	Ohio State
16.	**Zach Collaros** His 2,900-yard season included a 463-yard effort against USF.	Sr.	Cincinnati
17.	**G.J. Kinne** Directing a super offense that averaged 41.4 points per game last season.	Sr.	Tulsa
18.	**Geno Smith** Big East's most efficient passer in '10 gets keys to Dana Holgorsen's attack.	Jr.	West Virginia
19.	**Taylor Martinez** Potential to be so much higher, but there is still a prove-it factor at work.	So.	Nebraska
20.	**Dominique Davis** Boston College transfer led C-USA in passing yards (3,967) and TDs (37).	Sr.	East Carolina
21.	**Danny O'Brien** Took over as starter in fourth game; ACC Rookie of the Year in 2010.	So.	Maryland
22.	**Tyler Wilson** Should put up huge numbers as he takes over for Ryan Mallett.	Jr.	Arkansas
23.	**E.J. Manuel** Already has two bowl wins to his credit as an injury replacement.	Jr.	Florida State
24.	**Bryant Moniz** Another prolific Hawaii quarterback: Passed for 5,040 yards last year.	Sr.	Hawaii
25.	**Kyle Padron** June Jones has himself another good one; 3,828 yards, 31 TDs last year.	Jr.	SMU

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S18 Colo (-12½) Hawaii	31-13	W	D 5 Raiders (+13) Chargers	28-13	W
S19 Cowboys (-7) Bears	20-27	L	D12 Cowboys (+3½) Eagles	27-30	W
S25 ArizSt (+12½) Oregon	31-42	W	D19 Panthers (-2½) Cards	19-12	W
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Lattimore has the legs, and head, for success

MARCUS LATTIMORE

Photo by Wesley Hitt/Getty Images

There will be no repeats of last year's Georgia game for Marcus Lattimore. That game was played Sept. 11 in Williams-Brice Stadium. It was Lattimore's first Southeastern Conference game and not even his own coaches — much less the Bulldogs or the rest of the SEC — knew exactly what South Carolina had.

"The Georgia game is when we realized this guy could really play," Gamecocks coach Steve Spurrier said.

"I think it was the first 3rd-and-11, and we handed off on the draw play to him and he broke a couple tackles, made about 15 yards. We said, 'Well, let's give it to him again and see what happens.'

"He breaks about two tackles at the line of scrimmage, makes about eight yards. (We're thinking), 'This ain't bad here.'"

When the day was done, Lattimore had carried 37 times for 182 yards, lifting the Gamecocks past Georgia. When the season was done, Lattimore had 1,197 yards on 249 carries and helped carry South Carolina to the SEC East championship, just its second conference title of any kind in more than 100 years of football.

Lattimore won't sneak up on anyone this year.

He went on to have two more 180-plus yard games in 2010, posting the third-best rushing season in school history and setting the school single-season scoring record with 17 touchdowns. While doing that, he fumbled only once, on a play against Florida State in which he was knocked unconscious.

He was the consensus national Freshman of the Year and heads into the 2011 season with bigger goals.

"I want to be the best running back in the country," Lattimore said. "To do that, I just have to work hard and keep working hard."

He began that work as soon as the season ended. Lattimore was chosen by his teammates as one of 12 captains for the team's winter workouts; he led his team to the session's title.

"Marcus Lattimore is one of our best leaders, if not the best," strength coach Craig Fitzgerald said. "Nobody has been better than him. He's our best worker, best player, certainly the best combination of the two."

The weight room work was evident when the 6-foot Lattimore showed up for spring practice weighing 233 pounds, up more than 15 pounds from his freshman weight. The bulk has a purpose, Lattimore said, which is to combat the only chink in his armor — durability.

Two of the Gamecocks' five losses last year came when Lattimore was on the bench — due to an ankle injury in the second half of the Kentucky game and a concussion against Florida State in the Chick-fil-A Bowl.

Lattimore's rushing attempts were the third-highest single-season total in South Carolina history, and he came to school with a lot of mileage already on his legs. He carried the ball 849 times in his final three seasons at Byrnes High School in Duncan, S.C., where he was considered the nation's best running back by at least one recruiting service.

"I knew I had to put on some pounds because of the carries I get," he said. "I just want to last the whole season. To do that, I had to get bigger, I had to get faster and I had to get stronger. ...

"I have a big role this year as a leader, and I am just trying to do the right things so the whole team will do the right things because it's contagious."

Talking about doing the right thing, Lattimore is more than the Gamecocks' bell cow on the field. He's also one of their most active players off the field as a regular speaker at local churches.

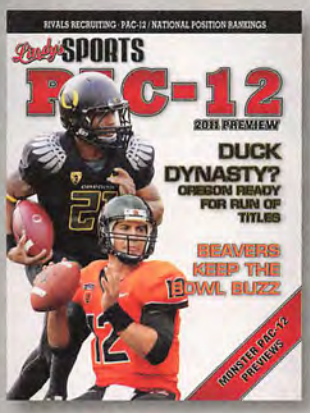
Earlier this year, Lattimore visited a fellow student who was in a coma at a Columbia hospital after being hit by a car. None of the team's coaches or support personnel, who try to limit his off-field appearances due to the demands on his time, knew he made the trip until informed by a reporter.

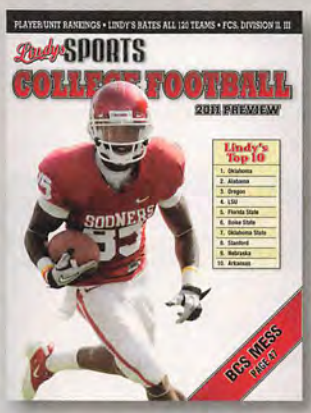
"The family was just so grateful for me to come," Lattimore said. "They said, 'You just don't know how much it means to him.' It just feels good to me knowing I have that kind of impact."

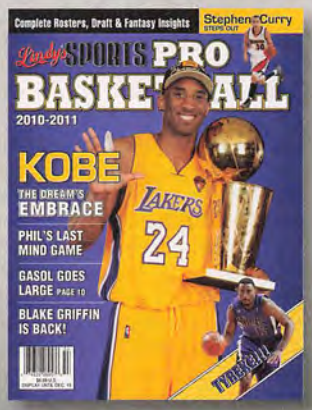
— Josh Kendall

TOP RUNNING BACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**LaMichael James**	Jr.	**Oregon**
	No. 1 rusher in 2010 (1,731 yards); nine career games of 150-plus yards.		
2.	**Marcus Lattimore**	So.	**South Carolina**
	We'll see many more workhorse efforts like vs. Florida, Georgia last year.		
3.	**Trent Richardson**	Jr.	**Alabama**
	Could threaten for Alabama's second Heisman in three seasons.		
4.	**Knile Davis**	Jr.	**Arkansas**
	First-team All-SEC last season, rushing for 1,322 yards and 13 TDs.		
5.	**Michael Dyer**	So.	**Auburn**
	More freshman yards than Bo - and one title-game run for the ages.		
6.	**Edwin Baker**	Jr.	**Michigan State**
	Stated goal: Be second Spartan (Lorenzo White) to get 2,000 in a season.		
7.	**Cyrus Gray**	Sr.	**Texas A&M**
	Enters this season with seven consecutive 100-yard games.		
8.	**Montel Harris**	Sr.	**Boston College**
	At least 100 yards in 13 of past 16 games in which he's played.		
9.	**Chris Polk**	Jr.	**Washington**
	With new QB, Huskies need a workhorse; he's the right man for the job.		
10.	**Ronnie Hillman**	So.	**San Diego State**
	Nation's leading freshman rusher last season with 1,532 yards.		
11.	**Rex Burkhead**	Jr.	**Nebraska**
	Takes over job full time and should pop well past 1,000 yards this year.		
12.	**Montee Ball**	Jr.	**Wisconsin**
	Can't really differentiate between him and James White; both are super.		
13.	**James White**	So.	**Wisconsin**
	Can't really differentiate between him and Montee Ball; both are super.		
14.	**Doug Martin**	Sr.	**Boise State**
	Underrated running and pass-catching complement to QB Kellen Moore.		
15.	**Andre Ellington**	Jr.	**Clemson**
	After toe surgery and with the full-time job, he's set for big 2011 season.		
16.	**Bobby Rainey**	Sr.	**Western Kentucky**
	Hilltoppers will wear him out: 340 carries for 1,711 yards last year.		
17.	**Stepfan Taylor**	Jr.	**Stanford**
	His 1,137-yard season went a long way to easing loss of Toby Gerhart.		
18.	**Lance Dunbar**	Sr.	**North Texas**
	Legit? Had 117 yards vs. Clemson, 270 (!) vs. Kansas State last season.		
19.	**Rodney Stewart**	Sr.	**Colorado**
	If the Buffs can count on anything, it's Stewart going for 1,000 yards.		
20.	**Ed Wesley**	Jr.	**TCU**
	Sizzled early last season before being slowed by injuries.		
21.	**Chris Rainey**	Jr.	**Florida**
	He and Jeff Demps give OC Charlie Weis speed in the running game.		
22.	**Vick Ballard**	Sr.	**Mississippi State**
	Set school record last season with 19 rushing touchdowns.		
23.	**Isaiah Pead**	Sr.	**Cincinnati**
	Nice day against Oklahoma last season: 169 yards on 21 carries.		
24.	**Robbie Rouse**	Jr.	**Fresno State**
	Had back-to-back games last season with more than 200 yards.		
25.	**Brandon Bolden**	Sr.	**Ole Miss**
	Led Ole Miss in rushing (976 yards) and receptions (32) last season.		







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Effort and opportunity turn Blackmon into superstar

JUSTIN BLACKMON

Photo by John Williamson

Oklahoma State has had its share of sudden-impact players in the past, with Barry Sanders and Dez Bryant rising from the depth chart and setting the college football world on fire.

But even the Cowboys had never had anything like Justin Blackmon. A prideful and hard-working sophomore in a group of potential contributors, Blackmon rose so fast, so high and so far in 2010, he might as well have had flubber on his feet and stick-um on his hands.

In his first year as a starting wide receiver, Blackmon caught 111 passes for 1,782 yards and 20 touchdowns, all school records. He set an NCAA record with 13 games of at least 100 yards and one touchdown. He was a unanimous All-American, the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year and the Biletnikoff Award winner.

All this after a redshirt freshman season in which he made a mere 20 catches for 260 yards and two touchdowns.

How, then, did Blackmon come out of nowhere?

"I would say just working hard in the offseason, just trying to get better, trying to push myself to be the best I can be," he said.

Blackmon's success wasn't some product of a gimmick offense. He averaged 148.5 yards per game, 16.1 yards per catch and 32 yards per touchdown, scoring five times from 60 yards or more. He also scored on a blocked punt and a 69-yard run.

Maybe the secret to Blackmon's sudden success was that his quarterback, Brandon Weeden, was right there with him.

The 27-year-old Weeden's only previous experience prior to his breakout 2010 was as a minor league pitcher and a backup quarterback who rallied the Cowboys to victory with two strong quarters of relief work in 2009.

Weeden's career stats going into last fall were meager: in four games, he completed 16 of 27 passes for 256 yards, with four touchdowns and an interception. Last season, he set OSU records for attempts, completions, yards, touchdowns and total offense.

"There's a lot of stuff we did learn and kind of threw up on the run," Blackmon said, "but I think this spring and this next year coming up, I think we'll be able to get a little bit better at things."

Blackmon spurned the NFL draft to return to Stillwater for his junior season. He knows he can get better. Identifying exactly how he can get better was the challenge for the Oklahoma State coaching staff in the offseason.

New offensive coordinator Todd Monken, who coached OSU All-American Rashaun Woods from 2002-04, said Blackmon realized what needed to be done.

"He went from playing a little bit to being the Biletnikoff winner," Monken said. "He did that by being a big, powerful man with great hands. Now, he can really change himself as a route-runner."

Blackmon's finest moment of 2010 may have been his "worst" game — 105 yards and a touchdown on eight catches. He did that in the season finale against rival Oklahoma despite a severe ankle sprain. He hopped to the sideline on one leg after almost every catch but nearly rallied the Cowboys with a big fourth quarter.

It was a fitting finish to an unforgettable season. Blackmon started the year unknown, but by the end, he was the team's go-to guy, the Cowboys' best chance at victory.

"It was just a time where we had just had the incident with Dez and everything (Bryant's NCAA suspension in 2009), so we were searching for somebody to take that lead role," Blackmon said. "The opportunity was there, and if we just worked hard in the spring, it would happen.

"I knew if I put my mind to it, it was possible it could happen, and that's just what I strived to do."

— John Hoover

TOP WIDE RECEIVERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Justin Blackmon**	Jr.	**Oklahoma State**
	Biletnikoff winner had 100 yards in all 12 games he played in last season.		
2.	**Ryan Broyles**	Sr.	**Oklahoma**
	Surprised most by coming back after 131 catches for 1,622 yards, 14 TDs.		
3.	**Alshon Jeffery**	Jr.	**South Carolina**
	Great size makes him easy target down field; 17.2 yards per catch in '10.		
4.	**Jeff Fuller**	Sr.	**Texas A&M**
	At 6-4, with good body control, can't be stopped on the fade route.		
5.	**Juron Criner**	Sr.	**Arizona**
	Had 82 catches for 1,233 yards, 11 TDs, while often playing hurt.		
6.	**Kendall Wright**	Sr.	**Baylor**
	Career numbers for athletic playmaker: 194 catches, 2,341 yards, 16 TDs.		
7.	**Greg Childs**	Sr.	**Arkansas**
	Will be back to big-play form after knee injury cut short 2010 season.		
8.	**Jermaine Kearse**	Sr.	**Washington**
	Hauled in 20 touchdown receptions in the past two seasons.		
9.	**Patrick Edwards**	Sr.	**Houston**
	Going for his third 1,000-yard season, never been done in UH history.		
10.	**T.J. Moe**	Jr.	**Missouri**
	Slippery slot WR authored "Moe Miracle" catch-and-run to beat SDSU.		
11.	**Jeremy Ebert**	Sr.	**Northwestern**
	First-team all-conference last season; Dan Persa's favorite target.		
12.	**Dwight Jones**	Sr.	**North Carolina**
	Emerged as a playmaker last year; had 233-yard effort vs. Florida State.		
13.	**Marquess Wilson**	So.	**Washington State**
	Tall, lean receiver is Pac-12's best deep threat (18.3 yards per catch).		
14.	**Roy Roundtree**	Jr.	**Michigan**
	In the spring, there was talk he might be awarded coveted No. 1 jersey.		
15.	**Joe Adams**	Sr.	**Arkansas**
	Arkansas overflowing with depth at the receiver position		
16.	**Conner Vernon**	Jr.	**Duke**
	Second-team All-ACC and led league in catches per game (6.1).		
17.	**Tavon Austin**	Jr.	**West Virginia**
	Moves to inside WR; numbers should soar in Dana Holgorsen's offense.		
18.	**Eric Page**	Jr.	**Toledo**
	Waterbug of a receiver even put up 120 yards on Boise State last year.		
19.	**Lance Lewis**	Sr.	**East Carolina**
	Finished season on tear, including 11 catches for 137 yards vs. Maryland.		
20.	**Tavarres King**	Jr.	**Georgia**
	He'll be the man catching lots of passes from Aaron Murray this season.		

TOP TIGHT ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Michael Egnew**	Sr.	**Missouri**
	He's already Missouri's third All-American tight end since 2007.		
2.	**George Bryan**	Sr.	**NC State**
	A two-time first-team All-ACC player; 13 career TD catches.		
3.	**Ladarius Green**	Sr.	**Louisiana**
	Led the nation's tight ends in 2010 with 794 receiving yards.		
4.	**David Paulson**	Sr.	**Oregon**
	Field-stretcher (17.4 ypc) that gives Ducks even more room to operate.		
5.	**Orson Charles**	Jr.	**Georgia**
	On the same page: Was a high school teammate of QB Aaron Murray.		

* Not rated due to spring suspension: Michael Floyd, Jr., Notre Dame

PLAYER RATINGS

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Alabama's Jones Puts the 'All' in All-American

In the late 1940s through the mid-1960s, basketball coach and author Clair Bee wrote a series of books about a star high school athlete named Chip Hilton, who played for Valley Falls High School.

Hilton starred in every sport, generally considered an All-American boy. The character of Hilton was based on a Seton Hall basketball player named Bob Davies.

Photo by RD Moore

BARRETT JONES

If someone were writing those books today, Alabama offensive lineman Barrett Jones could be the model. If there is a quintessential All-American boy playing college football, it is Jones.

When he graduated from Evangelical Christian School in Memphis in 2008, Jones had all the accolades an offensive lineman could hope to have.

He was Division II AA Mr. Football in the state of Tennessee. He was the No. 1 player in Tennessee. He played in the Army All-American Bowl and was actually rated No. 1 nationally at center by Rivals.com.

As a true freshman, Jones played in three games before a shoulder injury ended his season and forced him to take a medical redshirt year. He came back in 2009 and immediately won the right guard spot, starting every game as Alabama won the national championship.

Along the way, Jones, and his offensive line mates were instrumental in helping Mark Ingram win the Heisman Trophy. Jones was named to the Freshman All-America team.

As for the non-football part of his life, Jones has been honored for academic achievement and community service. In 2010, he didn't take the normal college spring break vacation. Instead, he went to Haiti to help victims of the devastating earthquake.

"We have problems day-to-day and week-to-week in our lives," Jones told Izzy Gould of the *Tuscaloosa News* bureau. "We make such a big deal about them and we think they're so extreme. You go over there and you literally see somebody who has nothing and lives under a tin roof and a mud hut, and you think how fortunate you are to come home and have food."

The experience so touched Jones that he returned to Haiti during this past spring break.

"I saw a little progress, but honestly not much," he said. "There's so much damage over there it's like, where do you start? As we know, they don't really have the infrastructure in place to really rebuild it. It's still a bad situation."

As a sophomore, Jones ran his streak to 25 consecutive starts at right guard before a high ankle sprain forced him to miss the final two games of the regular season. He entered spring drills expected to be one of the top guards in the country.

So what happens?

Naturally, coach Nick Saban tried Johnson at left tackle late in spring drills. Saban never said before or after the spring game whether the move will be permanent, but Jones did play the entire A-Day game at left tackle with the No. 1 unit.

(For the sake of our player rankings, we consider Jones' body of work at guard.)

Jones never complained about the late-spring move. In fact, he embraced it.

"We've been experimenting with some different lineups, and I've been there a little bit," Jones said about playing left tackle.

"It's been very different, but it has been a challenge. I think it is exciting to be challenged. I am extremely comfortable at guard, obviously, but I think it has been an opportunity for me to show some versatility.

"It's been a lot of fun and a whole new position," Jones added. "I'll play anywhere if it helps the team; I really don't care."

Chip Hilton could not have said it any better.

— Ben Cook

TOP CENTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Mike Brewster**	Sr.	Ohio State
	A fourth-year starter who already has pulled in All-America honors.		
2.	**David Molk**	Sr.	Michigan
	Right there with Brewster; was first-team All-Big Ten by coaches.		
3.	**William Vlachos**	Sr.	Alabama
	Second-team All-SEC last season; has made 27 consecutive starts.		
4.	**Ben Habern**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Oklahoma reports that he had 123 knockdown blocks last season.		
5.	**Moe Petrus**	Sr.	UConn
	Made 39 starts in a row, including 13 at left tackle in 2008.		
6.	**Travis Swanson**	So.	Arkansas
	Tall for middle man (6-5, 305); Freshman All-SEC last season.		
7.	**Ben Jones**	Sr.	Georgia
	Seems to have been around forever; 35 starts at center in SEC.		
8.	**Scott Wedige**	Sr.	Northern Illinois
	All-MAC first teamer cleared the way last season for stout ground attack.		

TOP GUARDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Barrett Jones**	Jr.	Alabama
	Moving to tackle? Won first-team All-SEC honors as a sophomore.		
2.	**David DeCastro**	Jr.	Stanford
	All-Pac-10 player part of line that has allowed 13 sacks in two seasons.		
3.	**Larry Warford**	Jr.	Kentucky
	Second-team All-SEC last season at right guard.		
4.	**Brandon Washington**	Jr.	Miami
	The leader of a promising line after earning first-team All-ACC award.		
5.	**Lonnie Edwards**	Sr.	Texas Tech
	Enters his third year as the starter; was second-team all-league in 2010.		
6.	**Joel Foreman**	Sr.	Michigan State
	Fourth-year starter will push for first-team All-Big Ten honors.		

TOP TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Nate Potter**	Sr.	Boise State
	Will be BSU's second first-round tackle in five years (Ryan Clady).		
2.	**Matt Reynolds**	Sr.	BYU
	Would be three-time all-conference ... if BYU was still in a conference.		
3.	**Levy Adcock**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	Mostly came from nowhere last season to become All-Big-12.		
4.	**Jonathan Martin**	Jr.	Stanford
	Nation's most important blue-collar job: Protect Andrew Luck's blind side.		
5.	**Mike Adams**	Sr.	Ohio State
	Big Ten's best lineman takes a little hit here because of suspension.		
6.	**Kelechi Osemele**	Sr.	Iowa State
	Doesn't get much bigger than this -- 6-6, 354 pounds.		
7.	**Riley Reiff**	Jr.	Iowa
	Another big, tough Iowa offensive lineman. A future first-rounder?		
8.	**Andrew Datko**	Sr.	Florida State
	One of three veteran starters along the Seminoles' front line.		
9.	**Mike Ryan**	Sr.	UConn
	Building off All-Big East season and midseason move to left tackle.		
10.	**Cordy Glenn**	Sr.	Georgia
	Moving from guard to better protect Aaron Murray from the left side.		

Big Problem, Big Ten: You Gotta Get by Crick

JARED CRICK

Photo by John Williamson

Formal introductions will come in the fall, but Nebraska All-American defensive tackle Jared Crick started his acquaintance with Big Ten offenses in the spring by watching game film.

His initial reaction of the linemen he'll butt heads with in the Cornhuskers' new conference?

"They're very technique sound and they're very big," he said. "They love to run the ball and we love to stop the run. That's something we pride ourselves on, and it's going to be a battle every game.

"We're expecting a fight to win the game, but that's what we want. We wouldn't have it any other way."

Nebraska defensive coordinator Carl Pelini hinted in the spring that the Huskers could throw some wrinkles at their new opponents. He said he might line up Crick at defensive end. Crick said the Huskers worked on different looks in the spring, utilizing more blitzes and movement than they had in the past.

But when push comes to shove — and Crick did those things pretty well in the Big 12 for the past two seasons — Crick doesn't believe Nebraska will have to resort to defensive tricks.

His message to Big Ten teams that think they can try to run the ball down the Huskers' throats: Bring it.

"If we play our defense, it doesn't matter who's running at us with what," he said. "We're still going to beat them. Everybody on this defense believes that."

And they believe it in part because Crick made Nebraska fans happy last January with those two magic words: "I'm staying."

He was among a trio of Nebraska juniors who considered leaving early for the NFL.

Instead, Crick, cornerback Alfonzo Dennard and linebacker Lavonte David decided to return for their senior seasons, giving the Huskers legitimate All-America candidates on three different levels of the defense.

"I think Fonzo is going to be as good of a corner as there is in the country, same with Crick and same with Lavonte," Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said. "You surround them with the type of talent and the type of depth that we have, and we have a chance to be pretty formidable on that side of the ball."

The 6-6, 285-pound Crick, a second-team Associated Press All-America selection in 2010, gives the Huskers a dominant presence in the middle of the line. His size, strength and quickness have made him a disruptive force in each of the past two seasons, when he recorded 19 sacks on a defense that ranked as one of the nation's best.

Crick, who missed the second half of spring practice with a minor knee injury, needs 10.5 sacks to become Nebraska's career leader. He's expected to be back at full speed by the time Nebraska starts preseason practice in August.

As a senior, Crick will try to become the 22nd player in Nebraska history to earn first-team all-conference honors for a third time ... and it would be pretty cool to do that while spanning two conferences.

Crick was projected as a first- or second-round pick had he come out this year. Next year, there's little doubt that, barring injury, Crick will be a first-round selection.

NFLDraftScout.com ranks Crick as the No. 1 defensive tackle for 2012.

Based on what sticking around did for a former teammate, Crick figures his decision to stay in Lincoln one more season will pay off.

Ndamukong Suh considered leaving Nebraska in 2008 but returned for his senior season in 2009. He wound up being named the AP Player of the Year, went No. 2 in the 2010 draft and starred last fall as a rookie for the Detroit Lions.

"He could have come out a year early and would have probably been drafted around the bottom of the first round," said Gil Brandt, senior draft analyst for NFL.com., referring to Suh. "By staying in school, he probably made himself $35 million over the course of his first contract."

Brandt regularly counsels juniors on sticking around for their senior seasons.

"More so than the money being much better," he said, "they come in and they're better players."

— Steve Pivovar

TOP DEFENSIVE ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Brandon Jenkins** Monster first season as a starter: 13.5 sacks, 21.5 tackles for loss.	Jr.	Florida State
2.	**Quinton Coples** Should be even more disruptive as full-time end after also playing inside.	Sr.	North Carolina
3.	**Devin Taylor** Impressive to be first-team SEC defensive lineman as a sophomore.	Jr.	South Carolina
4.	**Bruce Irvin** 14 sacks to lead attacking unit that was second nationally in sacks (45).	Sr.	West Virginia
5.	**Vinny Curry** 12 sacks, led nation's DL with 94 tackles (despite late knee problems).	Sr.	Marshall
6.	**Jacquies Smith** Teams with Brad Madison to form best pair of ends in Big 12.	Sr.	Missouri
7.	**Shea McClellin** All-WAC last season with 13.5 tackles for loss, 9.5 sacks.	Sr.	Boise State
8.	**Jonathan Massaquoi** Sun Belt terror who had 13.5 sacks and 20.5 tackles for loss last season.	Jr.	Troy
9.	**Jake Bequette** Second-team All-SEC last year; leads a strong pass-rushing outfit.	Sr.	Arkansas
10.	**Vince Browne** Productive player begins season with 31 career tackles for loss.	Sr.	Northwestern
11.	**Nick Perry** Has all the physical requirements; USC's most dominant defender.	Jr.	USC
12.	**Ronnell Lewis** Small, quick hybrid end; "The Hammer" ready to blossom into a star.	Jr.	Oklahoma

TOP DEFENSIVE TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Jared Crick** With a Suh-like presence, he has 19 sacks in the past two seasons.	Sr.	Nebraska
2.	**Billy Winn** Helps lead Boise State defensive line that still is among nation's best.	Sr.	Boise State
3.	**Kendall Reyes** All-Big East 298-pounder can play inside or out; had 79-yard INT return.	Sr.	Connecticut
4.	**Mike Martin** Always productive from interior; has speed to rush off edge, too.	Sr.	Michigan
5.	**Josh Chapman** 310-pounder is going to eat up blockers for super Bama back seven.	Sr.	Alabama
6.	**John Simon** Non-suspended Buckeye will be a key factor early in the season.	Jr.	Ohio State
7.	**Kawann Short** Active 300-pounder to draw more attention with DE Ryan Kerrigan gone.	Jr.	Purdue
8.	**Jerel Worthy** Strong player already has bulled his way into 17 tackles for loss.	Jr.	Michigan State
9.	**Kheeston Randall** A cornerstone for DC Manny Diaz's more aggressive Texas defense.	Sr.	Texas
10.	**Everett Dawkins** Super quick on the interior for Mark Stoops' havoc-causing defense.	Jr.	Florida State
11.	**J.R. Sweezy** Breakout season in 2010 with 11.5 tackles for loss, 5.5 sacks.	Sr.	NC State
12.	**Marcus Forston** Has NFL-type skills; might be slowed early because of MCL injury.	Jr.	Miami

PLAYER RATINGS

LINEBACKERS

OU's 'Mouth of the South' Helps Sooners Roar to No. 1

Photo by Ronald Martinez/Getty Images

TRAVIS LEWIS

When weighing the decision of whether to leave for the NFL or stay at Oklahoma, all Travis Lewis had to do was look around the Sooner locker room.

Before long, the outside linebacker was sold on coming back.

"We've got a lot, a lot of athletes on this team. A lot of playmakers on either side of the ball," said Lewis, who was considered a potential first-round pick in this year's draft.

"One of the biggest reasons I came back is because I feel like this defense is worthy of winning a national championship. So is this team."

Lewis' return is a big reason why Oklahoma starts the season as *Lindy's* preseason No. 1.

"His ability and his leadership and his knowledge of the game is huge for this team," defensive coordinator Brent Venables said.

Lewis has led OU in tackles for three consecutive years. He is one more banner season away from becoming the first in Sooner history to lead the team in tackles all four years. Also, with 362 career stops, Lewis is just 128 away from moving into second in the OU record books for career tackles behind former All-American Daryl Hunt (1975-78).

"Anytime you have a first-round pick coming back, it never hurts," said middle linebacker Austin Box, who came to OU with Lewis in 2007. "Especially a guy like Travis, the type of player he is. He's on the leader board in tackles with the greats in OU history.

"When it's all said and done, he's going to be considered one of the greats."

But Lewis' value to the Sooner defense can't be measured merely in tackles.

Lewis — nicknamed by Venables as "The Mouth of the South" for his incessant trash-talking — remains the vocal and emotional leader of the defense.

And someone who thrives on keeping football fun.

In the days leading up to 2010 spring game, Lewis crowed that his White team would shut out the Red. Sure enough, it did. Afterward, Lewis showed up to the interview room donning a white jumpsuit with a white hat and shades to celebrate.

He did the same thing this past spring, wearing all red after his side defeated the White.

"That's me. Making players love football. I love that," Lewis said. "I want to spread that to the other players. Make them remember why they're playing this game.

"Go out there and not just be the voice of the coaches, but have fun with the guys."

Lewis, however, isn't all fun and games.

After the Sooners lost back-to-back road games to Missouri and Texas A&M last season, Lewis called out the defense for wilting in the fourth quarter. He criticized his own play, while also declaring OU could still capture the Big 12 title by winning out — which is exactly what the Sooners did.

"Travis is entertaining," coach Bob Stoops said. "He's a great competitor, though. It's one thing to be entertaining without being a great competitor — I'm not much for that.

"He's what you want in how he works and with his toughness and attitude and taking it seriously."

Handling the pressure of being No. 1 is something Lewis definitely takes seriously.

Quick to remind teammates and media that, "We were No. 1 for about five days last year and we know how that ended," Lewis considers it his responsibility to help keep a relatively young team on an even keel despite facing enormous expectations.

"We have to keep focusing on the little things. Keep focusing on the details," he said.

"Things like not missing class, keeping the locker room clean. When you're ranked No. 1, people start forgetting about the little details and start only thinking about the big picture.

"But we're excited. The way we finished last year, finishing on a strong note. ... The sky's the limit for this defense. For this team."

Thanks in large part to Lewis.

— Jake Trotter

TOP INSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Vontaze Burfict**	Jr.	Arizona State
	Most fearsome player in the country; trying to mix in some smarts.		
2.	**Luke Kuechly**	Jr.	Boston College
	Best fits the description of "tackling machine" — 329 in two years.		
3.	**Dont'a Hightower**	Jr.	Alabama
	Following 2009 knee surgery, looked like old explosive self in spring.		
4.	**Lavonte David**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Set Huskers' season record with 152 tackles in first year in program.		
5.	**Tank Carder**	Sr.	TCU
	Knocked down Wisconsin's two-point conversion attempt in Rose Bowl.		
6.	**Manti Te'o**	Jr.	Notre Dame
	Had 133 tackles on Irish defense that started to grow up late in 2010.		
7.	**Miles Burris**	Sr.	San Diego State
	Breakthrough year made him MWC's leader in sacks (9.5) and TFLs (20).		
8.	**Chris Marve**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	Nobody in the SEC right now has more than his 306 career tackles.		
9.	**Bruce Taylor**	Jr.	Virginia Tech
	Stout middle 'backer effective in the backfield and against the pass.		
10.	**Jerry Franklin**	Sr.	Arkansas
	His 100 tackles last season marked third year leading the Hogs.		
11.	**Audie Cole**	Sr.	NC State
	Takes over in the middle after departure of Nate Irving; 97 stops in 2010.		
12.	**Shayne Skov**	Jr.	Stanford
	Tough guy hounded Virginia Tech in Orange Bowl —had 12 tackles.		

TOP OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Travis Lewis**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	No reason why he won't reach 100 stops for the fourth consecutive year.		
2.	**Courtney Upshaw**	Sr.	Alabama
	SEC's most dangerous edge defender? 14.5 TFLs, four forced fumbles.		
3.	**Danny Trevathan**	Sr.	Kentucky
	Made 144 tackles last season, including 16.5 for loss.		
4.	**Brandon Lindsey**	Sr.	Pittsburgh
	Will play a hybrid OLB/DE position this season; 17.5 TFLs last season.		
5.	**Kenny Tate**	Sr.	Maryland
	Athletic playmaker moves from FS to play a hybrid OLB/S position.		
6.	**Shaun Lewis**	So.	Oklahoma State
	Big second half of year included 12-tackle, two-INT effort vs. Oklahoma.		
7.	**Sean Spence**	Sr.	Miami
	Veteran performer posted 16 tackles for loss among 110 stops in 2010.		
8.	**Keenan Robinson**	Sr.	Texas
	2010 tackle leader (113) on a defense that was still Texas tough.		
9.	**Mychal Kendricks**	Sr.	Cal
	Proven play-maker enters season with 22 career tackles for loss.		
10.	**Mike Taylor**	Jr.	Wisconsin
	Just needs to get through the season without any knee problems.		
11.	**Jake Knott**	Jr.	Iowa State
	Tough son-of-a-gun made 130 tackles, forced four fumbles last year.		
12.	**Darius Fleming**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Adds dash of big-play potential to Irish with 25.5 career tackles for loss.		

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

May He Have a Word? Oregon's Harris Aims for Fast Return to 'The Natty'

CLIFF HARRIS

Photo by Jason O. Watson-US PRESSWIRE

His name is Cliff Harris, and he's here to ... lead.

Harris, who intercepted six passes and returned four punts for touchdowns in 2010, has grown. He's still 5-11 and 165 pounds, but he's matured greatly from the kid who introduced himself to his new Oregon teammates a couple of years ago.

"My name is Cliff Harris," the kid from Fresno said then. "And I'm here to lock (stuff) down."

His teammates laughed. They asked, "Who does this skinny kid think he is?"

Soon, everybody found out who Cliff Harris was — electric on the field and highly quotable off it.

The Harris "vocab" spread among Duck fans, who reveled in his description not only of himself — "I'm just like the cheese on top of the nachos" — but of everything else. He coined the term, "The Natty," referring to the BCS National Championship Game, before the Ducks even got there.

But after he likened rival Oregon State to a "little brother," Harris was kept away from the microphones for a little while.

He spoke publicly again during The Natty's media day, telling reporters that he wouldn't have much to say, then holding court for a half-hour, flashing his vocab and a bright smile. In that respect, Harris won't change, but in the spring, Oregon coaches and players noticed the change in him.

"He's just come so far from a maturity standpoint that he's not even the same guy he was a year ago, let alone two years ago," said Tom Osborne, who coaches Harris on the Ducks' special teams.

"He's not a little kid anymore. He's not out here like it's recess between classes. He's much more focused on what he's doing; he listens."

Harris is still excitable, and quotable. Come fall, he'll likely be just as enthusiastic, and he'll probably continue some quirky ways that include circling his teammates at midfield before a game instead of joining them, jumping up and down.

But as far as preparation, as far as putting in the work, Harris has become a serious football player heading into his junior season.

"I would say last year I was more young," Harris said. "I was, like, lackadaisical and just not mature. Now, I know what I want to do, and I'm going to do it."

He did plenty last year. Two of his interceptions came on one day, against one talented quarterback, Stanford's Andrew Luck. Thanks to great recovery speed and body control and that moxie, Harris became a big-play corner.

As a return man, he was named All-America by the Football Writers Association of America and several other media outlets. He earned second-team All-America status as a cornerback by the Associated Press.

All the while, though, his coaches pleaded for a little more "we" and a little less "me." And it's the "we" that seems to be the driving force behind Harris' maturity, a response to the Ducks' narrow miss at college football's top prize.

"Every play that I didn't make, that's what's on my mind — every play that I missed, they sit in the back of my head," Harris said. "I love the game, and I'm a winner — I don't like to lose. The drive to win, that's what it is."

Harris leads — and we use that term seriously now — what should be a strong secondary as the Ducks try to win the Pac-12 and get back to "The Natty."

The defense as a whole was the talk of the spring in Eugene, wreaking havoc on the prolific Oregon offense to the point where running back LaMichael James proclaimed this the best defense ever at Oregon.

"The potential is always there, to be the best secondary in the nation," Harris said. "And the drive and the work ethic is there. So we just got to put it into play."

After an offseason of maturation and replaying "The Natty" in his mind, Harris is eager to get going on his biggest return yet — to the title game.

"I'm stronger, faster, more wiser on the field, more knowledge — everything," he said.

He's no longer the cheese. He's one very important nacho.

"He's just a different guy," Osborne said. "It's fun to see."

— John Hunt

TOP CORNERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Cliff Harris**	Jr.	Oregon
	Quick, aggressive, elite athletically ... and he picked Andrew Luck twice.		
2.	**Jayron Hosley**	Jr.	Virginia Tech
	Nine picks last season to lead nation; will he get many chances in 2011?		
3.	**Stephon Gilmore**	Jr.	South Carolina
	As much potential as anyone on this list, and more dedicated now.		
4.	**Alfonzo Dennard**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Another all-star to follow in footsteps of Blackshirts' Prince Amukamara.		
5.	**Keith Tandy**	Sr.	West Virginia
	Lindy's pick for preseason Big East Defensive Player of the Year.		
6.	**Shaun Prater**	Sr.	Iowa
	Earned All-Big Ten honors in 2010, when he picked off four passes.		
7.	**Chase Minnifield**	Sr.	Virginia
	All-ACC last season, with six interceptions and NFL skills.		
8.	**Morris Claiborne**	Jr.	LSU
	5 INTs last season as he emerges from Patrick Peterson's shadow.		
9.	**Coryell Judie**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	A&M's best cover man in a decade? One of top playmakers in the Big 12.		
10.	**Casey Hayward**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	Led the SEC with 17 passes defended last season; had six INTs.		
11.	**Josh Robinson**	Jr.	UCF
	Was more than respectable against A.J. Green in Liberty Bowl victory.		
12.	**Xavier Rhodes**	So.	Florida State
	Tall and rangy, was ACC Defensive Rookie of the Year last season.		

TOP SAFETIES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Mark Barron**	Sr.	Alabama
	2010 All-American limited in spring (torn pec) but will be hitting soon.		
2.	**Robert Lester**	Jr.	Alabama
	SEC-high 8 INTs last year. Bama 1-2 at safety? Yes, Saban is that good.		
3.	**Harrison Smith**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Had five INTs in four-game winning streak to end Notre Dame's season.		
4.	**Delano Howell**	Sr.	Stanford
	Former RB gives Stanford what it always needs in secondary — athleticism.		
5.	**T.J. McDonald**	Jr.	USC
	Son of former USC Trojan Tim McDonald; made 89 tackles in 2010.		
6.	**Hakeem Smith**	So.	Louisville
	Earned Big East Rookie of the Year honors on a standout defense.		
7.	**Ty Zimmerman**	So.	Kansas State
	Was second-team All-Big 12 last season as a true freshman.		
8.	**Jordan Kovacs**	Jr.	Michigan
	Had 116 tackles last season to rank second in the Big Ten.		
9.	**Tony Jefferson**	So.	Oklahoma
	Superb freshman season as nickel back earned comps to Roy Williams.		
10.	**Ray-Ray Armstrong**	Jr.	Miami
	At 6-4, he has the look of being the next great Miami defensive back.		
11.	**Jarred Holley**	Jr.	Pittsburgh
	Five interceptions last season and second-team All-Big East honors.		
12.	**Duke Ihenacho**	Sr.	San Jose State
	Two-time All-WAC player back from redshirt season (foot injury).		

*Not rated due to spring ACL injury: Omar Bolden, Sr., Arizona State

PLAYER RATINGS

ALL-PURPOSE

Big Schools Missed on Johnson; Now, It's Defenders Who Whiff

Damaris Johnson was always told he was too small. His size kept him from big-time scholarship offers.

Johnson admitted it was tough to handle rejection after putting up solid statistics at Destrehan (La.) High School, which is near New Orleans. He was not recruited hard by LSU; he drew little interest from Tulane.

Photo by Dennis Hubbard

DAMARIS JOHNSON

TOP KICKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Blair Walsh**	Sr.	Georgia
	Two-time Groza Award finalist has made 40 of 45 FGs in past two years.		
2.	**Danny Hrapmann**	Jr.	Southern Miss
	Connected on 26 of 31 last season, with a long of 54 yards.		
3.	**Grant Ressel**	Sr.	Missouri
	Can't argue with reliability from inside 50; 43 of 46 FGs in 2009 and 2010.		
4.	**Will Snyderwine**	Sr.	Duke
	His career percentage of 86.4 ranks third among active kickers.		
5.	**Dan Conroy**	Jr.	Michigan State
	All-Big Ten last season after making 14 of 15 with a long of 50.		
6.	**Phillip Welch**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	Badgers will be happily counting on him for fourth consecutive season.		
7.	**Carson Wiggs**	Sr.	Purdue
	Has kicked the four longest field goals in school history — 59, 55, 53, 51.		
8.	**Dave Teggart**	Sr.	UConn
	52-yard game-winner against USF sent Huskies into a BCS bowl.		

TOP PUNTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Quinn Sharp**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	Huge leg on punts (46.24 yards) and kickoffs (national-best 53 touchbacks).		
2.	**Drew Butler**	Sr.	Georgia
	Has career average of 46.1 and knows when to take a little off, too.		
3.	**Bryan Anger**	Sr.	Cal
	Two-time All-Pac-10; set Cal mark with 45.6-yard average last season.		
4.	**Jeff Locke**	Jr.	UCLA
	Averaged 45.8 yards, and Bruins led nation in net punting (41.3).		
5.	**Tress Way**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Two more years to go, but 45.4-yard average is OU's career best.		
6.	**Tyler Campbell**	Jr.	Ole Miss
	2010 average of 46.37 was just enough to claim the national lead.		
7.	**Kyle Martens**	Sr.	Rice
	Was at 38.3 yards as a freshman ... up to 46.0-yard average last season.		
8.	**Bobby Cowan**	Jr.	Idaho
	10th nationally in punting last year; Vandals were 12th in net yardage.		

TOP ALL PURPOSE

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Damaris Johnson**	Sr.	Tulsa
	Going for his third consecutive season of leading in all-purpose yards.		
2.	**Cliff Harris**	Jr.	Oregon
	Four punt return TDs last season means he's on this list and at CB.		
3.	**Brandon Boykin**	Sr.	Georgia
	Standout corner; four KR scores and might also return punts this year.		
4.	**T.Y. Hilton**	Sr.	FIU
	Career: 17 receiving TDs, 6 rushing, 4 on kicks, 1 by punt, 1 by passing.		
5.	**David Wilson**	Jr.	Virginia Tech
	Led ACC in kick returns in 2010, and speedster is now the No. 1 tailback.		
6.	**Eric Page**	Jr.	Toledo
	MAC mighty-mite receiver returned three kickoffs for scores in 2010.		
7.	**Robert Woods**	So.	USC
	Made immediate impact as a freshman at receiver (65 catches) and KR.		
8.	**Chris Owusu**	Jr.	Stanford
	Game-breaking speed ... just needs a full season of good health.		

So, Johnson found a home at the University of Tulsa, which might be appropriate because it is the smallest football school in the FBS. Johnson stands only 5-8 and weighs 170 pounds, but he is the big man on campus.

Johnson possesses NCAA records for total all-purpose yardage and career kickoff return yardage — and he did it in only three seasons.

The wide receiver/returner has 7,796 total career yards, surpassing Western Michigan's Brandon West (7,764 yards) with a 326-yard performance in last season's Hawaii Bowl. The 10,000-yard mark is within reach, which is amazing considering only seven players in FBS history have exceeded 7,000 all-purpose yards.

Johnson has 3,417 kickoff return yards, altering many game plans by forcing short kickoffs that swing field position in the Hurricane's direction.

How does it feel for the player who was once considered too small to make such an impact in major college football?

"When I first signed with Tulsa, I thought about that. It frustrated me that a lot of schools did not recruit me and I felt I could do things that could help their programs," Johnson said.

"But now I am happy that they did not offer me a scholarship or pick me up. I do not think any place would have given me a chance to show my skills like I get to do at Tulsa. This is the place where I was supposed to be all along."

Tulsa won out over TCU, Memphis and Southern Miss. Johnson selected Tulsa because of the high-powered offense of then-offensive coordinator Gus Malzahn. He also was promised to play as a true freshman.

Johnson made an impact in his third game, grabbing three touchdown receptions against New Mexico. He had 10 receiving touchdowns that season while getting carries from his wide receiver position in Malzahn's hurry-up, no-huddle system and also returning kickoffs. He had six games with 200-plus all-purpose yards.

Johnson added punt return responsibilities in his sophomore season and showed his skills in the season opener at Tulane. With plenty of friends and family in the Louisiana Superdome, Johnson returned a punt 66 yards for a touchdown. Johnson had three consecutive games with 300-plus all-purpose yards and he led the nation by averaging 224.4 yards per game.

Johnson led the nation in all-purpose yards again last season with 202.2 yards per game, earning Associated Press second-team All-America honors.

He became Tulsa's "wildcat" quarterback and finished with a team-high 13 touchdowns. Highlights included a 59-yard punt return for a score in a win at Notre Dame and the 326 total yards in the bowl in a 62-35 win over the Warriors.

One intangible to the upcoming season: Johnson will play for his fourth different offensive coordinator — Greg Peterson — in as many years. It does not worry him.

"Every year, we have been pretty productive on the offensive side of the ball. Each coordinator has put us in places to make plays. I see the same thing with Coach Peterson. He's putting different wrinkles in to expand the offense," Johnson said.

Tulsa's nonconference schedule will put Johnson on a big stage. The Hurricane plays Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Boise State in September. All are in *Lindy's* preseason Top 10. Johnson said he's looking forward to the challenge, but it's the one road game in the middle of that tough trio of games that he is excited about.

"We play at Tulane in the middle of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma State games," Johnson said. "That is my highlight this year. I am getting to go home and play in front of my family."

Plus, that game counts in the Conference USA standings.

"I have not accomplished everything that I want," Johnson said. "We have not won a conference championship. I would love to do that."

— Eric Bailey

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP 10 BACKFIELDS

As always, we're looking for just the right combination of quarterbacks and running backs in this category. It's probably not enough to just have top 10 talent at quarterback (say, Baylor's Robert Griffin) if you have a newcomer at running back. And it's usually not ideal, for our rating purposes, to have a superb pair of running backs (say, Auburn's Michael Dyer and Onterrio McCalebb) if you can't determine after spring who your quarterback is going to be.

Using a lot of art and a touch of science, here are our top 10 backfields:

1. STANFORD

It starts with Andrew Luck, of course, king of the class at quarterback. You know all about him (and if you don't, you can read more about him in this very magazine). While he can make all the throws and use his shoulder to deliver a wallop to a defender when he takes off, there is a beautiful run-game balance to Stanford's offense.

As was the case last season with Luck — and as will be the case again this season with new head coach David Shaw — the Cardinal remains committed to being a downhill running team. Tailback Stepfan Taylor further asserted himself in the spring after rushing for 1,137 yards last season, averaging 5.1 yards per carry. The top backups at running back return, too.

2. OREGON

The Ducks' backfield is more electric than Stanford's (but, again, the edge goes to Andrew Luck). Oregon quarterback Darron Thomas was the big question mark at this time last year, but he was a cool customer when the season started, throwing for 30 touchdowns with only nine interceptions while deftly handling the decisions — and the football — in the read-option offense.

While not as fast as ex-Oregon QB Dennis Dixon nor as strong as immediate predecessor Jeremiah Masoli, Thomas has the right skills to take advantage of whatever the defense gives him. Often, that involves identifying the right matchup and giving the ball to the nation's leading rusher (LaMichael James) or blurrific Kenjon Barner ... and there's even more speed deeper in reserve.

3. BOISE STATE

Senior quarterback Kellen Moore is Mr. Efficiency, although he'll have to get things done through the air this season without favorite targets Austin Pettis and Titus Young. The Broncos will find a way to get it done — they always do — while the offense can always step up the number of carries for Doug Martin, who rushed for 1,260 yards last season, averaging a healthy 6.3 yards per attempt.

4. TEXAS A&M

With the Aggies spinning their wheels last year, stuck at 3-3 in coach Mike Sherman's third season, he gave an opportunity to backup quarterback Ryan Tannehill and further chances to running back Cyrus Gray. Together, they fueled a six-game winning streak to end the regular season ... and now they're back for their senior seasons.

Stepfan Taylor

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn /Sports Illustrated/Getty Images

5. OKLAHOMA

Landry Jones went from over-his-head injury replacement in 2009 to one of the nation's most prolific passers in 2010. He's now the central character in a national championship run. With DeMarco Murray gone, the tailback baton could pass to Roy Finch, who dazzled at times as a freshman, zig-zagging through defenses. But it could be a committee approach at running back because the wave of talent doesn't stop, with speedy freshman Brandon Williams trying to take his share of carries.

6. MICHIGAN STATE

The Spartans look to have Top 25 staying power behind third-year starting quarterback Kirk Cousins (18th nationally in passing efficiency last season) and junior running back Edwin Baker. His 1,201 yards last season were just a stop, he says, on the way to 2,000 this year.

7. SAN DIEGO STATE

Senior Ryan Lindley, with his 6-4 size, is the best pro quarterback prospect in the Mountain West. SDSU is sticking with its pro-style offense under new coordinator Andy Ludwig, but the lack of experience at receiver means defenses might take their chances in the secondary and scheme to stack the box against sophomore RB Ronnie Hillman, coming off a 1,532-yard, 17-touchdown debut.

8. GEORGIA

The Bulldogs have the surest bet at quarterback in the SEC — sophomore Aaron Murray, who set a school freshman record with 3,216 total yards. Options are plentiful at running back with Caleb King, Washaun Ealey and, most excitingly, true freshman Isaiah Crowell.

9. CINCINNATI

The Bearcats, trying to bounce back from a 4-8 season, have two All-Big East talents in quarterback Zach Collaros and running back Isaiah Pead, both seniors.

10. OHIO STATE

This applies only after the fifth game of the season (those five suspended players really make the Buckeyes a bear to rank this season), but it's not the worst thing to get a potential nine games out of QB Terrelle Pryor and RB Dan Herron.

TOP 10 RECEIVERS

1. OKLAHOMA

Hard to believe that just two years ago, this was a weakness for the Sooners. Poised to shatter NCAA career receiving records, Ryan Broyles is one of the two best wideouts in the country. He's flanked by Kenny Stills, who set OU freshman receiving records, and senior Dejuan Miller, back from season-ending knee surgery.

If that wasn't enough, the Sooners signed one of the top prep receivers in the country: Whitehouse (Texas) phenom Trey Metoyer, who is capable of contributing right away.

2. ARKANSAS

The Razorbacks are stacked, led by Greg Childs, who has 1,000-yard potential as he comes off an injury-shortened season. He'll have to the share the passes with Joe Adams, Jarius Wright and Cobi Hamilton, who all give new starting QB Tyler Wilson many happy options. These four receivers combined for 170 receptions last season for 2,870 yards and 23 touchdowns.

3. OKLAHOMA STATE

Coming off a Biletnikoff-winning season, Justin Blackmon is back to do more damage. Blackmon (20 TDs) was unstoppable in his first season as

a starter and set an NCAA record by recording 100 receiving yards in every game he played. Slot receiver Josh Cooper (68 receptions) can make defenses pay for doubling Blackmon with his underneath routes. Michael Harrison, Isaiah Anderson, Hubert Anyiam, Colton Chelf and Tracy Moore, who combined for 55 catches in 2010, have all shown flashes and make this a deep and dangerous unit.

4. TEXAS A&M

Jeff Fuller gets overshadowed in the Big 12 by Ryan Broyles and Justin Blackmon, but he might boast the most pro potential of the three. Fuller and Ryan Swope are coming off school-record 72-reception seasons, and starter Uzoma Nwachukwu rounds out this formidable unit.

5. ARIZONA

Juron Criner posted one of the most prolific seasons in school history, with 82 catches for 1,233 yards and 11 touchdowns — most of which was accomplished at far less than 100 percent because of injuries. The field could further open up for him this season with the addition of Texas transfer Dan Buckner, giving the Wildcats a pair of talented 6-4 receivers on opposite sides. Arizona is as deep as anyone at receiver, including ultra-reliable David Douglas.

6. SOUTH CAROLINA

Alshon Jeffery has the height, skills and production to go high in the 2012 NFL Draft. He will be looking to build off a sophomore season in which he made 88 catches for 1,517 yards and nine touchdowns. D.L. Moore gives the Gamecocks more 6-4 height, with Ace Sanders providing wiggle and speed from the slot.

7. VIRGINIA TECH

Hard to believe the run-oriented Hokies have the top receivers in the ACC, but believe it. They have two big guys who can post up smaller corners in Jarrett Boykin and Marcus Davis, a classic possession receiver in Danny Coale and a burner in Dyrell Roberts. Can new QB Logan Thomas get them the ball?

8. MICHIGAN

As Michigan transitions to a pro-style offense, the big question is whether Denard Robinson can handle the passing game. He'll have lots of help at receiver, starting with Roy Roundtree and Darryl Stonum. Junior Hemingway and Martavious Odoms are other good targets. That's a combined 169 catches for 2,402 yards and 16 touchdowns.

9. MISSOURI

The Tigers bring back all three starting receivers, plus *Lindy's* preseason All-American tight end Michael Egnew. Slot man T.J. Moe was ninth nationally last season in catches per game (7.1); Egnew was 10th (6.9).

10. HOUSTON

With Patrick Edwards on the outside and Tyron Carrier at an inside receiver position, Houston has two seniors who are trying to do something that hasn't been done in school history — reach 1,000 receiving yards in three seasons.

TOP10 OFFENSIVE LINES

1. ALABAMA

Offensive line coach Jeff Stoutland could have stayed at Miami for new coach Al Golden, but he traded his promising, young Hurricane line for an even better Tide front that could pave the way to a national championship. (Plus, a raise never hurts.)

Stoutland introduced some new blocking schemes in the spring and did some tinkering in the A-Day game, moving all-star guard Barrett Jones to left tackle (where he would replace first-rounder James Carpenter). Jones is one of four returning starters, which include star senior center William Vlachos and sophomore right tackle D.J. Fluker, a former five-star recruit who is growing into the hype.

2. OKLAHOMA STATE

The Cowboys ranked third in the nation in scoring last season and bring back all five starters, including all-conference tackle Levy Adcock. Guards Lane Taylor and Jonathan Rush and center Grant Garner also received all-conference consideration in 2010. This unit can run block or pass protect with the best of them.

Photo by Joe Robbins/Getty Images

3. FLORIDA STATE

While the Seminoles lose the ACC's best lineman in Rodney Hudson, they return three players with a combined 101 career starts. Left tackle Andrew Datko figures to be the league's top offensive lineman this year, while right tackle Zebrie Sanders has started 37 games. David Spurlock could end up moving from guard to center, but FSU has to shake out its depth in the fall and see who lands where.

4. OHIO STATE

The Buckeyes will be way better when left tackle Mike Adams returns from a five-game suspension, but senior Mike Brewster is an All-American center, so the line should manage to be fine in September. Depth might be an issue, but having two All-America talents for the back half of the season pushes the Buckeyes high on the list.

5. VIRGINIA TECH

The Hokies welcome back four senior starters with a combined 94 career starts, including right tackle Blake DeChristopher (37) and right guard Jaymes Brooks (28). If new center Andrew Miller can adequately replace last year's top lineman, Beau Warren, Tech should be explosive again on offense.

6. STANFORD

It's rare when a team that has to replace three starters ends up ranked among our national top 10 offensive lines. But it's also rare that a team has a pair of All-America candidates such as guard David DeCastro and tackle Jonathan Martin. The Cardinal's tough-guy, downhill approach remains intact, too.

7. LSU

Four starters are back from a punishing line — and they could provide a mismatch in the critical season opener against Oregon, which has only one returning starter along its defensive front.

8. TEXAS TECH

The Red Raiders bring back their five starters, including left guard Lonnie Edwards, who figures to be the best guard in the Big 12. Tackles LaAdrian Waddle and Mikey Okafor are also stout.

9. OLE MISS

The Rebels are strong at tackle with Bradley Sowell on the left and Bobby Massie on the right. This experienced unit helped Ole Miss rate in the national top 20 in rushing last season.

10. MIAMI

Plenty of potential here with All-ACC guard Brandon Washington and former No. 1 recruit Seantrel Henderson, among others. He started at right tackle last season as a true freshman and moves to the left side this year.

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP10 DEFENSIVE LINES

1. FLORIDA STATE

Defensive coordinator Mark Stoops, in his first season at Florida State, transformed the defense into a big-time playmaking outfit, and the line is beginning to look like it's 1999. FSU was third nationally last season in sacks (3.43 per game) and was 29th against the run, allowing 128.7 yards per game.

Defensive end Brandon Jenkins (13.5 sacks last season) is coming off a monster season, and Stoops has four players capable of starting — and starring at tackle — including Everett Dawkins. Junior college transfer Tank Carradine, who signed with the 'Noles over Ohio State and Georgia, showed freakish skill in the spring. The battle to earn playing time in practice will be intense.

2. NEBRASKA

The Blackshirts hit the Big Ten Conference, and the baddest of the Blackshirts is senior defensive tackle Jared Crick, who has 19 career sacks — 10.5 away from Trev Alberts' school record. That seems doable, although Crick will have fewer sack chances away from the pass-happy Big 12. Two other starters return — junior tackle Baker Steinkuhler and junior end Cameron Meredith.

3. NORTH CAROLINA

The NFL pipeline continues. All four starters return, led by Quinton Coples, who notched 10 sacks and 15.5 tackles for loss last year, and he could be even more devastating this season as he moves back to end. On the other side, end Donte Paige-Moss can also get to the quarterback. Tydreke Powell is a 315-pound run-stuffer. There is just a lot of mix-and-match talent, inside and outside, and junior college transfer Sylvester Williams was a spring force, too.

4. SOUTH CAROLINA

Gamecocks fans probably want star recruit Jadeveon Clowney to be a preseason All-American, like, right now ... but they will just have to settle for end Devin Taylor instead. If Clowney can make a Marcus Lattimore-type immediate impact, South Carolina would have an epic pass-rushing duo. As it was, the Gamecocks led the SEC last year with 41 sacks.

5. MISSOURI

Brad Madison had the most sacks last season (7.5) of any player returning in the Big 12. More impressive? He did it backing up Aldon Smith in his first year playing on the defensive line. Madison, a former offensive lineman, figures to only get better with another year at the position. Opposite Madison is Jacquies Smith (5.5 sacks), entering his third year as a starter. The Tigers return senior starting tackles Terrell Resonno and Dominique Hamilton, as well.

6. BOISE STATE

One coach told us last year that Boise State's defensive line was as good as he had seen last season — and that included Alabama's. The Broncos lose end Ryan Winterswyk from that unit but still has a pair of standouts — end Shea McClellin and tackle Billy Winn, who is learning all the time to better play to his potential on every snap.

7. USC

It would have been even better if DT Jurrell Casey had come back for his senior season, but depth issues for USC aren't as critical here as they are elsewhere on its roster. DE Nick Perry further opened eyes in the spring as a pass rusher, and Wes Horton is another experienced end. Christian Tupou, who redshirted last season because of a knee injury, hopes to be fine in the fall.

8. TEXAS

Defensive line wasn't the Longhorns' problem last year, and this year's unit should be strong once more. Veteran tackle Kheeston Randall (22 starts) anchors the middle, and end Jackson Jeffcoat is a rising star. Alex Okafor started at tackle last year but was moved to end in the offseason and had five sacks in the spring game.

9. WEST VIRGINIA

Still good, even though the Mountaineers lost all-conference performers Chris Neild and Scooter Berry. DE Bruce Irvin, was No. 2 nationally in sacks last year with 14 after playing mostly as a third-down specialist. Julian Miller is moving to tackle in the three-man front after being a big-time end.

Jared Crick

Photo by Peter G. Aiken/Getty Images

10. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners don't have a Gerald McCoy or Tommie Harris up the middle, but the four-man rotation of Casey Walker, Stacy McGee, Jamarkus McFarland and Daniel Noble is solid. OU should remain lethal at end. Ronnell Lewis (3.5 sacks) has all the tools, and Frank Alexander (seven sacks) surged down the stretch in 2010 after regaining his spot in the starting lineup.

TOP10 LINEBACKERS

1. ALABAMA

The Tide could time travel with this group and rank as the No. 1 linebackers in any year of the past decade. Dont'a Hightower — explosive again after a 2009 knee injury — and Courtney Upshaw have the stuff of All-Americans and first-round draft picks. The third starter could be Nico Johnson, could be C.J. Mosley ... and either could probably earn all-conference honors if Hightower and Upshaw leave any slivers of glory.

When last seen in real action, these 'backers were smashing Michigan State in a bowl game, limiting standout running back Edwin Baker to 14 yards on 12 carries.

2. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners are so loaded here that coach Bob Stoops called reserve outside linebacker Corey Nelson OU's top defender of the spring. Nelson would start, except he's behind All-American candidate Travis Lewis, OU's leading tackler for the past three seasons. Austin Box and Tom Wort have combined for 20 career starts in the middle.

3. TCU

The Horned Frogs, perennial national leaders in defense — No. 1 in yards allowed last season — have both starters back from their 4-2-5 scheme, including MWC Defensive Player of the Year Tank Carder. Tanner Brock, who had a team-high 106 tackles, is another all-star candidate.

4. TEXAS

The heart and soul of the Longhorns is at linebacker, where seniors Emmanuel Acho (87 tackles) and Keenan Robinson (137 tackles) are back. First-year defensive coordinator Manny Diaz has said that for Texas to return to the elite of college football, Acho and Robinson have to be elite, and they are certainly capable. They'll have plenty of help, too. Jordan Hicks, the No. 1 LB recruit in 2010, could be a future All-American, and Oklahoma native Demarco Cobbs thrived in the spring after being moved down from safety.

DEFENSE

5. ARIZONA STATE

Junior Vontaze Burfict, the (unofficial) national leader in personal fouls across the past two seasons, has worn college football's black hat. Now, he gets to wear a black lid — the Devils changed their helmets this spring at the same time Burfict was trying to change his attitude and reputation. Brandon Magee is fast and physical, too — and consistent. Seniors Shelly Lyons and Colin Parker each have starting experience as they battle for the other spot.

6. BOSTON COLLEGE

Luke Kuechly may be the ACC's best player pound-for-pound. All he does is make tackles, leading the nation last year at 14.1 per game. Add in Kevin Pierre-Louis (93 tackles last season as a true freshman) and a stacked two-deep, and the Eagles might repeat as having the nation's top run defense.

7. NOTRE DAME

Junior Manti Te'o grew as a player and a leader as a sophomore, making a team-high 133 tackles for first-year coach Brian Kelly. The Irish went from 89th nationally against the run in 2009 to a more respectable 50th last season. With two other starting linebackers returning in the 3-4 scheme, the Irish should keep improving.

8. NEBRASKA

Lavonte David was a one-man linebacker crew — and an awfully good one at that — last season as the Cornhuskers sometimes went with six defensive backs to offset the spread passing games of the Big 12. He'll have more linebackers in his neighborhood this season in the Big Ten, with Sean Fisher returning from a broken leg that wiped out his 2010 season and Will Compton, who got "Pipped" last season by David after suffering an injury.

9. VIRGINIA TECH

Bruce Taylor came from nowhere to be second-team All-ACC last year, and the Hokies have three other guys capable of starting on the inside. Can the combination of Jeron Gouveia-Winslow and Alonzo Tweedy give this team adequate play at whip linebacker?

10. OHIO STATE

Etienne Sabino was still 17 when he arrived at Ohio State, so after playing for two years, he took a redshirt last season to mature and wait for jobs to open. Now he's the man in the middle of the defense, and he and Andrew Sweat should provide customary OSU production.

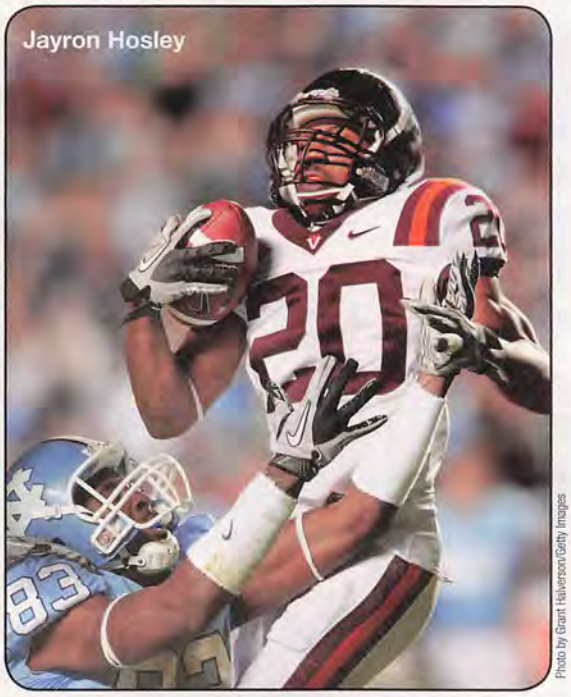
Jayron Hosley

Photo by Grant Halverson/Getty Images

TOP10 DEFENSIVE BACKS

1. ALABAMA

The Crimson Tide has this area covered with four all-star candidates, and they should chow down on what appears to be a weak class of SEC passers. If those quarterbacks (likely under pressure from the Alabama front) try to avoid cornerback Dre Kirkpatrick, they won't find much room on the other side against Dee Milliner. At 6-3, Kirkpatrick's NFL stock is powered by rocket fuel.

But the real strength of the secondary is the safeties — Mark Barron (who had seven interceptions in 2009) and Robert Lester, who picked off eight passes last season.

2. OREGON

The Ducks lose cornerback Talmadge Jackson, but they dip into their surplus and plug in experienced senior Anthony Gildon at the spot opposite All-American Cliff Harris. Harris had six interceptions and 17 pass break-ups last season to lead the nation with 23 passes defended. Starting safeties Eddie Pleasant and John Boyett are back for more on Oregon's speedy defense.

3. FLORIDA STATE

Every starter is back for the Seminoles, which will be led by Greg Reid (flashes of big-time potential) and Xavier Rhodes, second-team All-ACC as a freshman. They should have plenty of chances for picks with the pass rush provided by FSU's defensive line. They might be the best pair of corners in the country (hello, Alabama!), and both safeties return, too.

4. LSU

Can the Tigers lose corner Patrick Peterson — the No. 5 pick in the draft — and still have the top pass defense in the SEC? LSU sure seems to think so, because Morris Claiborne is another standout cornerback and sophomore Tyrann Mathieu showed special playmaking skills last season with 4.5 sacks, five forced fumbles and two interceptions.

5. VIRGINIA TECH

All-American cornerback Jayron Hosley is shooting for 10 to 15 interceptions this year — hey, aren't all the good ones? — although most opponents will avoid him if at all possible. Free safety Eddie Whitley is brainy and always winds up in the right spot. Watch for sophomore rover Antone Exum, who has NFL potential.

6. TEXAS A&M

After a disastrous beginning to last season, the Aggies came on strong midway through Big 12 play. Coryell Judie and Terrence Frederick are solid in coverage. Free safety Trent Hunter and strong safeties Steven Campbell and Steven Terrell are also back, giving the Aggies plenty of experience.

7. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners were delivered a blow in the offseason when All-Big 12 cornerback Jamell Fleming had to leave school for academic reasons. Fleming could return to campus by the fall, but even if he doesn't, OU could still be stingy. Nickel back Tony Jefferson (65 tackles) was stellar as a true freshman, and Demontre Hurst is a playmaking cornerback (three forced fumbles). Aaron Colvin was moved from corner to strong safety in the spring, and if he plays as well as he did in the spring game, look out.

8. MIAMI

The Hurricanes have some concerns at cornerback, so they borrowed from their safety depth and put Jo Jo Nicolas at corner in the spring. That allows Ray-Ray Armstrong, technically not even a returning starter despite 79 tackles and three interceptions last season, to move alongside junior standout Vaughan Telemaque at the safety spots.

9. OKLAHOMA STATE

The Cowboys are not known for defense, but they bring back one of the top safety tandems in the country in Markelle Martin and Johnny Thomas. Martin is the enforcer, while Thomas has a nose for finding the ball. Cornerback Brodrick Brown is solid both in coverage (eight pass breakups) and against the run (77 tackles).

10. SOUTH CAROLINA

With an athlete like Stephon Gilmore at cornerback, it doesn't make sense that South Carolina ranked 97th nationally against the pass last season. Expect major improvement. Akeem Auguste takes over the other corner spot, happy to be back after playing safety last season.

Illustration by Tim Williams

SIMPLY ROLLING

DEFENSE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS? PERHAPS, BUT OFFENSES ARE SCORING MORE THAN EVER

BY ANTHONY GIMINO AND DENNIS DODD

Eddie Pleasant was inconsolable. Michael Dyer was incredible.

There, on the floor of University of Phoenix Stadium was a metaphor for the 2010 season — and perhaps the future. At the end of a defensive struggle in the national championship game, the game-winning drive had been kept upright, barely, by the strength of Dyer's left hand.

Even if it was only barely — because of Dyer's tackle-defying 37-yard run — offense triumphed again.

By now you know that Pleasant, Oregon's strong safety, had made what seemed like a perfect form tackle on Dyer, Auburn's 1,000-yard then-freshman, in the waning seconds of that epic 22-19 win by the Tigers.

To 99.9 percent of the free world, it looked like Dyer was down. To the other 0.1 percent — notably the Auburn sideline, and some heads-up fans — it looked like Dyer was, well, free.

"I heard a lot of voices," Dyer said, "Even the crowd was saying, 'Go, go!'"

Those last two words have been the rallying cry for college football for more than a decade.

Most have become used to the ongoing offensive explosion in the sport, but lately the blast has been blinding. Of the 14 cumulative offensive statistical categories tracked annually by the NCAA, all-time records have been set in 10 of those categories since 2007.

We're coming off the second-highest scoring season in history (27.97 points per team). The record of 28.4 points was set in '07.

Records were set last season in:

- Yards per rush (4.32)
- Yards per play (5.61)
- Completion percentage (59.7 percent)

The average of 3.53 touchdowns per game was second only to 2007 as well, (3.55). The average-per-pass-attempt —

7.189 yards — was the highest in 12 years and second-highest in history.

Nobody should be surprised, then, that for the first time there wasn't at least one top 10 defense in the BCS title game. Not even close. Oregon was 34th nationally, making most of its big plays with a crew that was second nationally with 37 takeaways. Auburn was 60th overall.

The previous four SEC champs have finished in the top 10 in total defense. To be fair, the Tigers improved a lot in the final month of the season and their top-10 run defense could not be ignored.

The six-week layoff no doubt allowed defensive coordinators Nick Aliotti and Ted Roof time to zone in on Heisman winner Cam Newton (64 yards rushing, 41 below his average) and Oregon's LaMichael James, the nation's leading rusher (49 yards on 13 rushes).

But in a defensive struggle, it was a fitting cap to the season that one brilliant, unlikely offensive play may have been the difference.

Dyer somehow had kept his balance as Pleasant applied the hit, balancing himself with that left hand, essentially rolling over the defender. The kid who broke Bo Jackson's school freshman rushing record popped up — the rest of his body never touched the ground per official review — and completed that 37-yard run.

Shortly thereafter, Wes Byrum's chipshot field goal gave Auburn its second national championship and first in 53 years, a fifth consecutive title for the SEC and a perfect ending to a growing trend.

Defense may win championships, but the biggest and game-deciding plays still belong to the offense. Rules have long favored the offense. Defenses are still trying to figure out how to match up with skill players in space in the zone-read spread offenses.

The game has even trended more toward basketball where one or two players can make a difference offensively. What would Auburn have been without Newton?

"If they didn't have Cam," said former Auburn assistant Bill Oliver, "I guarantee you, I think seven ballgames would be the very most they would win with (that) defense."

So what's ahead? More of the same. The nation's top eight in total offense — all quarterbacks — are returning. So are a

BCS MATCHUPS

The BCS National Championship Game heads to New Orleans for the fourth time. LSU has been on the four-year plan, winning the national title in its near-hometown in 2004 and 2008. Perhaps it will be a case of good things happening in threes for the Tigers.

Here's how *Lindy's* sees the biggest games shaking out this season:

BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
MONDAY, JAN. 9
NEW ORLEANS, LA. * LOUISIANA SUPERDOME
BCS #1 VS. BCS #2
LINDY'S PICK: OKLAHOMA VS. ALABAMA

ROSE BOWL
MONDAY, JAN. 2
PASADENA, CALIF. * ROSE BOWL
BIG TEN #1 VS. PAC-12 #1
LINDY'S PICK: NEBRASKA VS. OREGON

SUGAR BOWL
MONDAY, JAN. 2
NEW ORLEANS, LA. * LOUISIANA SUPERDOME
SEC #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: LSU VS. STANFORD

ORANGE BOWL
TUESDAY, JAN. 3
MIAMI GARDENS, FLA. * SUN LIFE STADIUM
ACC #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: FLORIDA STATE VS. WEST VIRGINIA

FIESTA BOWL
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 4
GLENDALE, ARIZ. * UNIV. OF PHOENIX STADIUM
BIG 12 #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: OKLAHOMA STATE VS. BOISE ST.

rash of offensive stars who could have gone early to the NFL (James, Stanford's Heisman finalist Andrew Luck, Oklahoma State's Biletnikoff Award-winner Justin Blackmon).

There isn't expected to be much slippage from Oregon (No. 1 at 47 points per game in 2010). Jimbo Fisher has assembled a group of impressive playmakers at Florida State.

"It's definitely hard," said Oklahoma's Bob Stoops, a defensive guy who has led the Sooners to four BCS title games. "You look at all the creative ways offenses at the college level use their personnel. That's what it gets down to. ... You get so much diversity in how people are moving the ball."

You have to know which way this is heading in 2011 and beyond.

We are left with these images: That night Pleasant had his head in his hands on the Oregon sideline, barely able to cope. Wallowing in the heartbreak of defeat, he had to be convinced by teammates to leave the field. Meanwhile, Dyer's rollover crash with the Oregon defender already had a name.

"How about 'Rolling Toomer's'? teammate Ryan Pugh said.

Let the points and the toilet paper pile up.

ARBITRARY, ERRATIC AND DOWNRIGHT CONFUSING

No rule change in college football will have a greater impact than the new taunting legislation.

Yep, the NCAA is getting tougher on taunting. Sounds reasonable. Who, really, is in favor of bad sportsmanship and showboating? (Put your hands down, you Miami Hurricanes from 20 years ago.)

So, the new rule goes like this: If a taunting violation comes during a play before a touchdown is scored — stuff like high-stepping or diving into the end zone for no apparent reason — then those points come off the board and it's a 15-yard penalty at the spot of the foul.

Previously, the points would count and the infraction would be marked off on the conversion attempt or the kickoff.

This is going to be one big mess, improving business only for sports-talk radio hosts.

We've learned this already: taunting to one official isn't always taunting to another. Now, this will be a rule, with greater consequences — game-altering consequences — that has no chance of being enforced with anything close to an acceptable human standard of equality.

Let's rewind to the bowl season ...

It's hard to forget the Pinstripe Bowl when Kansas State's Adrian Hilburn, following a 30-yard touchdown reception with 1:13 remaining, saluted some of his team's fans in Yankee Stadium. Flag. That cost his team 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Instead of being able to go for a tying two-point conversion from the 3-yard line, the Wildcats had to go from the 18. The pass was incomplete, and Syracuse held on to win 36-34. *Because of a salute?*

Elsewhere, in the Alamo Bowl, Oklahoma State wide receiver Justin Blackmon — with nary an Arizona Wildcat around for 20 yards — teasingly ran along the goal line for at least half the length of the field before a defender closed. Blackmon then figured it was time to dip across the goal line. No flag.

That play didn't much matter in the outcome, but it just goes to show that taunting is so completely in the eye of the beholder — often a judgment call and not a technical call. And the officials already have enough judgment calls to make without raising the stakes.

ADRIAN HILBURN

Photo by William Perlman/THE STAR-LEDGER via US PRESSWIRE

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT

College football's tectonic plates are shifting again, although not as much as seemed likely last summer when the Pac-10 nearly plundered the Big 12.

Still, the ripples of change put several old faces in new places. Here's how it shakes out:

Pac-10

It's still weird to type Pac-12. Even weirder to say it. Is that how "old-timers" felt about the change from the Pac-8 to the Pac-10? We're just going to call this the 12-Pac, OK?

The league loses its full round-robin symmetry but gains a revenue-producing league championship game, which, in a college football twist, will be played at an on-campus site. The regular-season head-to-head winner between the division champs gets to be the host. If that doesn't apply, then the team with the higher BCS rating is the home team.

And bless Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott for giving us division names we can understand (assuming you can pass second-grade geography). With the addition of Utah from the Mountain West and Colorado from the Big 12, here are the new divisions:

SOUTH
Arizona
Arizona State
Colorado
UCLA
USC
Utah

NORTH
Cal
Oregon
Oregon State
Stanford
Washington
Washington State

Big Ten

The good ol' B1G. Can't say the Big Ten did as well with its branding as the Pac-10 — er, Pac-12 — did, and it will take most of us a little longer to figure out who are Legends and who are Leaders. (Division

names are expected to be re-evaluated by the league after the season. And, by the way, are the teams in the Legends not leaders? Are the Leaders not legends? Anyone? Anyone?)

Overall, though, can't argue with adding Nebraska to the league ... now watch the Cornhuskers win the first league championship game, which will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Clip and save:

LEGENDS

Iowa
Michigan
Michigan State
Minnesota
Nebraska
Northwestern

LEADERS

Illinois
Indiana
Ohio State
Penn State
Purdue
Wisconsin

Mountain West

The grand plan nearly came together — a league with newbie Boise State, BYU, Utah and TCU would be excellent — but the conference turned into a bit of a train station. And there are more arrivals and one departure after this season. BYU went independent and Utah went to the Pac-12. TCU is leaving for the Big East for the 2012 season, when the MWC adds Fresno State, Hawaii and Nevada from the WAC.

More to come to eventually make it a dozen? Perhaps, but in the meantime, this is an eight-team league in 2011.

WAC

The loss of Boise State drops the WAC to eight teams in 2011, and the league will have to reload in 2012 after losing three more schools. Texas State and Texas-San Antonio, each moving up from the lower-division Southland Conference, are on board. The conference will have to add at least one more.

THE MESS OF THE BCS

The BCS has grown accustomed to some level of criticism every year, but the entity that's effectively stonewalled a national championship playoff and propped up the bowl system has had perhaps its roughest year ever.

Despite a riveting title game between Oregon and Auburn, and despite a cash-infused, four-year partnership with ESPN with three years still to run, BCS defenders are holding the gates against a multi-front onslaught.

In no particular order, and ranked via no particular degree of potential damage, here is what Bill Hancock, the genial executive director of the BCS, is dealing with these days:

• A 276-page internal investigative report on the Fiesta Bowl that detailed excessive spending on bowl employees, politicians and business associates and culminated in the firing of the game's CEO, John Junker.

Perhaps no one was more identifiable on the bowl circuit than Junker, a 30-year Fiesta Bowl veteran who took the game from relative anonymity to royalty.

Junker was fired for his role in a scheme where Fiesta Bowl employees were prompted to make political contributions to friendly legislators, then were reimbursed with bonuses in the exact amount of the donations.

Junker admitted when questioned that the bowl's lavish spending was meant to win favor with power brokers who could secure helpful legislation, sweetheart business deals and ensure TV network contracts.

• Disclosure that the Orange Bowl hosted a three-day, four-night complimentary cruise to the Bahamas for 40 athletic directors and conference commissioners, plus their spouses. No business meetings were scheduled, but those on the cruise were entitled to a spa day and a trip to a private island. They were also given $100 pre-loaded cash cards upon boarding ship.

• Sugar Bowl executive director Paul Hoolahan got a bit too chatty when five Ohio State players suspended five games for breaking NCAA rules were nevertheless permitted to play in the Sugar Bowl. Hoolahan admitted he lobbied to have the players eligible for the game in New Orleans. "I made the point that anything that could be done to preserve the integrity of this year's game, we would greatly appreciate," Hoolahan said.

The integrity of the game?

That was an interesting choice of words from a man who makes $607,500, working for a "non-profit" entity that donated nada to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

• Word that both Virginia Tech and Connecticut took financial baths on their respective trips to the Orange and Fiesta Bowls after being required to purchase 17,500 tickets apiece at face value. Connecticut lost a reported $1.6 million on its trip to Glendale and Tech lost more than $420,000 off its trip to Miami.

• Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff announced plans to file a federal anti-trust suit against the BCS as an "illegal monopoly" and promised he would be joined by the attorneys general from two other states.

HEISMAN WATCH

Why bother? We have a clear favorite. Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck is the obvious choice — epically talented with name-brand recognition and a team that looks like Top 10 timber. Try to beat that combination.

On the other hand ... why bother with a favorite?

The past two Heisman winners — Alabama running back Mark Ingram and Auburn quarterback Cam Newton — were basically unidentifiable as candidates from this great of a distance, and they made a mockery of all the preseason Heisman lists.

Still, we trudge on.

With Newton off to the NFL, this is the first time in the past three years that we have no chance of a repeat winner. As always, we're preferably looking for a quarterback on a team that has a chance to win double-digit games.

Consider: Since 2000, nine of the 11 Mr. Heismans have been quarterbacks. Their team's combined record at the end of the regular season: 102-9.

Picking the quarterback from the best team (or close to it) is a shoddy and lazy way to pick the most outstanding college football player in the United States ... but that's how the voters have trended for more than a decade.

HERE ARE THE PAST NINE QB WINNERS AND THEIR TEAM'S RECORD BEFORE THE BOWLS:

2000	Chris Weinke, Florida State	11-1
2001	Eric Crouch, Nebraska	11-1
2002	Carson Palmer, USC	10-2
2003	Jason White, Oklahoma	12-1
2004	Matt Leinart, USC	12-0
2006	Troy Smith, Ohio State	12-0
2007	Tim Tebow, Florida	9-3
2008	Sam Bradford, Oklahoma	12-1
2010	Cam Newton, Auburn	13-0

So, who will it be this year? Here are 10 candidates, keeping in mind that this isn't a list of "best players." It's more a ranking of how likely a player can fit the narrowing Heisman criteria.

1. Andrew Luck, QB, Stanford — Last year's Heisman runner-up; nation's most complete quarterback.

2. Landry Jones, QB, Oklahoma — Could approach 5,000 passing yards again for our preseason No. 1 team.

3. Kellen Moore, QB, Boise State — Should end up as college football's winningest quarterback, but did the hype peak last season?

4. LaMichael James, RB, Oregon — James gets the bulk of the headlines — deservedly so — in Oregon's "Blur" offense. Bonus points or demerits for neon socks?

5. Marcus Lattimore, RB, South Carolina — Only a sophomore ... but sophomores won in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

6. Brandon Weeden, QB, Oklahoma State — He'll have the right stats. If the Cowboys beat Oklahoma, he'll have the right team, too.

7. Aaron Murray, QB, Georgia — The SEC's best quarterback, and the Bulldogs have a sneaky-good feel about them this season.

8. Trent Richardson, RB, Alabama — It's his time to shine after 2009 Heisman winner Mark Ingram left early for the NFL.

9. Taylor Martinez, QB, Nebraska — Has to nail down the job first, but when he's good, he's really, really good.

10. Denard Robinson, QB, Michigan — If Michigan surprises, the multi-talented Robinson will be the talk of college football.

STANFORD QB ANDREW LUCK

Photo by Steve Beyer

QUICK SUCCESS ... OR QUICK HOOK

Last year in this very magazine, in this very Scoping the Nation section, we told you that if a coach can't have quick success at a traditional superpower, then he deserves to be fired.

Michigan and Rich Rodriguez proved our point.

Auburn and Gene Chizik further proved our point.

Rodriguez couldn't get it done in three seasons in Ann Arbor. That's long enough. Stop *hoping* it can happen and actually do something to make it happen. Is Brady Hoke the answer? Don't know, but it was the right call to hit the reset button.

As for Chizik, he continued a remarkable run of nearly new coaches to win the national championship. (It should be noted that Oregon's Chip Kelly would have fit the bill, too.)

Check out the past 11 BCS national champions:

Year	Team	Coach	Season
2000	Oklahoma	Bob Stoops	2
2001	Miami	Larry Coker	1
2002	Ohio State	Jim Tressel	2
2003	LSU	Nick Saban	4
2004	USC	Pete Carroll	4
2005	Texas	Mack Brown	8
2006	Florida	Urban Meyer	2
2007	LSU	Les Miles	3
2008	Florida	Urban Meyer	4
2009	Alabama	Nick Saban	3
2010	Auburn	Gene Chizik	2

Seven of the past 11 national champions have had a coach in his first, second or third year at the school. Only one coach — Mack Brown — had been at the school more than four years.

Which relatively new coach at a superpower — or relative superpower — can make a three-year or less breakthrough? Let's look:

Florida State, Jimbo Fisher (second year) — The state of Florida starts anew. Fisher has a year head start on Miami (Al Golden) and Florida (Will Muschamp). He zooms to the pole position as FSU accelerates toward its first ACC title since 2005.

Notre Dame, Brian Kelly (second year) — He dramatically changed the offense, the tempo and the program's culture in his first season. In his second year, everything should be second nature. Now, can he beat Navy?

USC, Lane Kiffin (second year) — With the ongoing NCAA sanctions and scholarship limitations, young Mr. Kiffin got thrown into the deep end of the pool. The Trojans have enough to compete in the inaugural, and weak, Pac-12 South, but anything other than treading water is probably too much to ask.

Tennessee, Derek Dooley (second year) — It's as one rival SEC coach told *Lindy's* Jimmy Hyams about the Vols: "They're headed in the right direction. But they're climbing out of a hole with rain soaked walls. If they put their foot on the wrong ledge, they'll slide back down, but it's not because of the current staff. The talent level is the lowest since the arrival of John Majors." That would be 1977.

Oregon, Chip Kelly (third year) — More championship runs in the near future. He's sizzling. WTD.

Washington, Steve Sarkisian (third year) — It had been so long since the Huskies had been to a bowl, it was hard to remember when they were actually good. Sark got U-Dub to the postseason for the first time since 2002 with a strong finish in 2010. The jump from respectability to Rose Bowl-ability is greater, though, especially without Jake Locker.

GENE CHIZIK

Photo by RD Moore

UCLA'S RICK NEUHEISEL

Photo by Mark J. Rebilas-US PRESSWIRE

FIVE HOT SEAT COACHES

1. Mark Richt, Georgia — He's a winner, but you know how it works: What have you done for me lately? With a strong finish to the 2010 regular season, and with QB Aaron Murray and a stellar recruiting class led by Isaiah Crowell, Richt is set to challenge in the SEC East. PREDICTION: He'll win right now.

2. Rick Neuheisel, UCLA — He's had no luck with quarterbacks for three years, changed the offense last season and jettisoned coordinator Norm Chow in a staff shake-up after last season. Not the kind of stability that was promised when the Bruins — hate to bring this up again, but we gotta — claimed the "Football Monopoly in Los Angeles is officially Over." PREDICTION: Bruins will struggle again to be a .500 team.

3. Paul Wulff, Washington State — No matter the paltry talent he inherited, 5-32 in three seasons is still 5-32 in three seasons. PREDICTION: Creeping ever closer to competitiveness, and led by tough-guy junior quarterback Jeff Tuel, the Cougs will show just enough progress to keep Wulff around.

4. Mike Locksley, New Mexico — A 2-22 record plus off-field messes. Do the math. PREDICTION: Change coming.

5. Houston Nutt, Ole Miss — In the punishing SEC East, the Rebels blinked and have even fallen behind state rival Mississippi State. PREDICTION: No mercy in the SEC.

COACHING CHANGES

So much for the domino theory.

Time was, when a big-time job came open in an elite football program with a proud tradition, someone would jump from a good job elsewhere to take a great job where they could win even bigger.

Those days appear to be over, if the top jobs that changed following the 2010 season are any indication.

Five years ago, would you have bet that Florida, Miami (Fla.) and Michigan would be in the market for a new head coach and the hires would be an assistant coach at Texas and the head guys at Temple and San Diego State?

You most certainly would not have bet that way, unless you were delusional or into donating your money to build a casino in Las Vegas.

So congratulations, Will Muschamp, Al Golden and Brady Hoke, for giving your brethren off the radar reason to hope that they, too, can play the Palace after working Peoria.

We'd also like to thank Pittsburgh for adding some stability to the coaching-change ranks. Twenty-two jobs changed hands in 2010, and it looked like only 21 were going to switch entering 2011 until Pitt hired Mike Haywood to replace Dave Wannstedt and then dumped him 16 days later, 25 hours after he was charged with domestic violence.

If counting the Pitt change as a two-fer, exactly half the 22 jobs that changed hands were in BCS conferences, including two at Stanford and Connecticut after their guys took them to a BCS game.

Arkansas State

Out: Steve Roberts | **In:** Hugh Freeze

Freeze is surely smarter than he was portrayed in "The Blind Side," where he was Michael Oher's high school coach in Memphis and used as a punch-line dope to help Sandra Bullock's Oscar candidacy. It would be interesting to see Sandra Bullock come out of the stands to give the Red Wolves a little help, but Freeze was the offensive coordinator at Arkansas State last year, so we're betting he's got this thing handled.

Ball State

Out: Stan Parrish | **In:** Steve Lembo

They've grown pretty impatient in Muncie after going 12-0 in the regular season in 2008. Parrish got only two years, and his 6-19 record wasn't good enough. Lembo comes from Elon in the FCS ranks, where he went 35-22 in five seasons with one playoff berth.

Colorado

Out: Dan Hawkins | **In:** Jon Embree

It's the Big 12, brother, so you can't lose your last 17 road games. That, and a 19-39 record did in Hawkins, who never had a winning season in five years after going 53-11 at Boise State. To excite the alums, Embree, a former Buffalo tight end, left his job as a Washington Redskins' assistant to come back to Boulder. His staff is heavy on former Colorado players. Too bad none of them can suit up.

Connecticut

Out: Randy Edsall | **In:** Paul Pasqualoni

The strangest departure of the offseason was followed by the strangest hire. Edsall had brought UConn from Division I-AA to the big time, culminating in a Big East title and trip to the Fiesta Bowl. When he left for Maryland, the Huskies turned to Pasqualoni, who has knocked around at small schools and as an NFL assistant since being fired at Syracuse in 2004.

Florida

Out: Urban Meyer | **In:** Will Muschamp

Florida athletic director Jeremy Foley is taking a measured chance with Muschamp, who was the head coach in-waiting at Texas. Sure, he has a stellar resume as a defensive coordinator — probably the hottest assistant coaching prospect in the country — but being a head coach is way different. And taking over for Meyer, who won two national titles, it puts Muschamp in a fish bowl full of Gators.

Indiana

Out: Bill Lynch | **In:** Kevin Wilson

Lynch guided the Hoosiers to their first bowl in 14 seasons in 2007, but he couldn't sustain the success the late Terry Heoppner built into the program. Wilson hopes to bring the same high-powered offense he coordinated at Oklahoma, but multiple staff defections after he thought he had his guys in place shows IU is only a stepping stone.

Kent State

Out: Doug Martin | **In:** Darrell Hazell

Hazell will never say, but you wonder if he wishes he had stayed at Ohio State. Jim Tressel's five-game suspension would have put Hazell in the spotlight as assistant head coach with a chance to get a better job than the one he took before Tressel's violations came to light. Kent was 25 games under .500 in seven seasons under Martin.

Louisiana

Out: Rickey Bustle | **In:** Mark Hudspeth

Hudspeth looks like an outstanding hire, given his 66-21 mark with five playoff appearances in seven years at Division II North Alabama. The past two years, he's been an offensive assistant at Mississippi State under Dan Mullen. Louisiana dumped Bustle after nine bowl-less seasons.

Maryland

Out: Ralph Friedgen | **In:** Randy Edsall

So much for Coach of the Year honors. Friedgen won them in the ACC, guiding

Maryland to its seventh bowl in 10 seasons after a 2-10 swoon in 2009. He got a pink slip and a $2 million buyout. After a flirtation with Mike Leach, Maryland stole Edsall away from Connecticut in the immediate aftermath of the Fiesta Bowl.

Miami

Out: Randy Shannon | **In:** Al Golden

So much for Golden waiting on the Penn State job when Joe Paterno retires. He jumped at the chance to take his recruiting talents to fertile South Florida. Whether Golden can satisfy all the factions and former players at Miami is debatable, particularly since his QB might be interception-prone Jacory Harris, with whom Shannon went down in flames.

Miami, Ohio

Out: Michael Haywood | **In:** Don Treadwell

Haywood's spectacular rise and fall is the stuff of Hollywood ... or at least the Lifetime Movie Network. From 1-11 to 9-4 in his only two seasons, after which he left for Pittsburgh, only to get fired 16 days later upon being charged with domestic violence. In comes Treadwell from Michigan State, where he ably filled in during Mark Dantonio's heart-attack-induced absence.

Michigan

Out: Rich Rodriguez | **In:** Brady Hoke

Rodriguez's 15-22 overall record and 6-18 Big Ten mark weren't cutting it, so Michigan dumped him and went back to the Bo Schembechler tree. Hoke comes from San Diego State, but he coached under Lloyd Carr at Michigan. Carr assisted for Schembechler and Gary Moeller. So Hoke is in the family, but Jim Harbaugh was the favored son Michigan couldn't lure back.

Minnesota

Out: Tim Brewster | **In:** Jerry Kill

Out with the used-car salesman, in with a guy who looks like the neighborhood butcher. Kill comes from Northern Illinois, where he went 23-16 with three bowl bids in three years. He also won last year at Minnesota, but that wasn't too hard against the bombastic Brewster. He was 15-30, including 0-10 in trophy games.

Northern Illinois

Out: Jerry Kill | **In:** Dave Doeren

Call it a payback of sorts. After losing its head coach to the Big Ten, Northern dipped into those ranks and plucked Doeren from his perch as defensive coordinator at Wisconsin. His stay won't be much longer than Kill's three seasons, if successful, and he'll get the chance to make a big splash Sept. 17 when the Badgers play NIU at Soldier Field.

North Texas

Out: Todd Dodge | **In:** Dan McCarney

Notre Dame could have told North Texas about the dangers of hiring a high school coach. Dodge was positively Gerry Faust-ian in his failure, going 6-37 after a 79-1 prep mark. McCarney is proven, having taken Iowa State to five bowl appearances and two bowl wins before leaving in 2006 when he was the Big 12's longest-tenured coach.

Pittsburgh

Out: Dave Wannstedt and Michael Haywood
In: Todd Graham

You knew Tulsa's win at Notre Dame was going to get Graham a better job somewhere. He brings an exciting offense that's been Top Five nationally three of the past four years. The only ticklish issue is that Graham might not have AD Steve Pederson's full support. He picked Haywood over Graham first, until Haywood's arrest forced a second hire.

San Diego State

Out: Brady Hoke | **In:** Rocky Long

Long moved up from defensive coordinator and has hopefully regained his enthusiasm for being a head coach. When he resigned at New Mexico after 11 seasons in 2008, he said he didn't see the Lobos winning a Mountain West title under his direction. He inherits a 9-4 team coming off its first bowl win since 1988.

Stanford

Out: Jim Harbaugh | **In:** David Shaw

It would be interesting to poll Stanford fans on who they'd rather have return, Jim Harbaugh or Andrew Luck. Harbaugh left for the San Francisco 49ers, but Luck's return should help Shaw succeed after moving up from offensive coordinator. Harbaugh took top assistants Vic Fangio and Greg Roman with him, which could hurt.

Temple

Out: Al Golden | **In:** Steve Addazio

It's doubtful Temple fans are as excited to have Addazio as Florida fans are to be rid of him. He took tons of heat as the Gators' offensive coordinator post-Tebow, and now takes over for Golden, who won 26 games the past four seasons at a place where winning half that many is the norm.

Tulsa

Out: Todd Graham | **In:** Bill Blankenship

The problem Tulsa has is getting successful coaches to stay. That may not be as big an issue with Blankenship, who left a successful high school job five years ago to become an assistant at his alma mater, and now moves up to succeed Graham. The continuity gives Tulsa a chance to maintain the success that's brought three 10-win seasons the last four years.

Vanderbilt

Out: Robbie Caldwell | **In:** James Franklin

The SEC's toughest job is all the tougher when you get it in mid-July after Bobby Johnson's unexpected retirement. Caldwell's 2-10 mark may not have been all him. He resigned and Vandy found Franklin, who had positioned himself to succeed Ralph Friedgen at Maryland before that went sour. Franklin has an offensive pedigree and a reputation as an outstanding recruiter.

TOP 12 NON-CONFERENCE GAMES

1. OREGON VS. LSU, SEPT. 3 (ARLINGTON, TEXAS)

Dive right in. An opening-weekend game that could decide who plays for the national title. Isn't college football grand? Who's crazier, Les Miles or Chip Kelly? Who's faster — Oregon's offense or LSU's defense? Who's tougher?

2. OKLAHOMA AT FLORIDA STATE, SEPT. 17

The preseason No. 1 Sooners have two weeks to prepare. So does FSU, really, after opening against Louisiana-Monroe and Charleston Southern. OU won 47-17 last season in Norman, but big turnarounds from one season to the next are not uncommon.

3. ARKANSAS VS. TEXAS A&M, OCT. 1 (ARLINGTON, TEXAS)

Both teams have top 10 talent and oodles of offense. The Aggies will be looking for a different result against an SEC team than they had in the Cotton Bowl, when they lost 41-24 to LSU.

4. ALABAMA AT PENN STATE SEPT. 10

Not sure the Nittany Lions can truly be competitive in this one, but just the mention of Alabama and Penn State in the same game gives us the warm fuzzies of the Bear Bryant-Joe Paterno matchups of yesteryear.

5. BOISE STATE VS. GEORGIA, SEPT. 3 (ATLANTA)

This game has turned into as much of a statement game — if not more — for the Dawgs as it is for the Broncos.

6. LSU AT WEST VIRGINIA, SEPT. 24

Sensing a pattern here? SEC chows down on its share of non-conference marshmallows, but credit the league for getting dressed up for some serious stepping out. Here, the Tigers take on dangerous QB Geno Smith and coordinator Dana Holgorsen's revved-up Mountaineers offense.

7. FLORIDA STATE AT FLORIDA, NOV. 26

The Seminoles broke a six-game losing streak to the Gators last season, winning 31-7. That's one for Jimbo Fisher, who gets a new foe: Will Muschamp.

8. OHIO STATE AT MIAMI, SEPT. 17

Whatever we do we won't call this a "Golden opportunity" for Miami. Just won't do it. But that new 'Canes coach might want to jump on the suspension-riddled Buckeyes and make a statement while the gettin' is good.

9. NOTRE DAME AT MICHIGAN, SEPT. 10

Amid all the history, victories, championships and legendary coaches between these teams, we present Brian Kelly and Brady Hoke. Which kind of makes this matchup all the more intriguing as the programs carve out new trails.

10. BYU AT TEXAS, SEPT. 10

This is the first real test for the Longhorns and their re-made coaching staff. The newly independent Cougars have a tough September.

11. AUBURN AT CLEMSON, SEPT. 17

Auburn plays host to Mississippi State a week earlier. This two-week stretch will reveal much about the defending national champs.

12. MISSOURI AT ARIZONA STATE, SEPT. 9

We slipped both teams into the backend of our Top 25 but are unconvinced about both. Each gets to make its case in a prime-time Friday night telecast.

OKLAHOMA VS. FSU

Photo by Bill Frakes /Sports Illustrated/Getty Images

Photo by Ronald Martinez/Getty Images

LSU VS. ALABAMA

TOP 12 CONFERENCE GAMES

1. LSU AT ALABAMA, NOV. 5

Les Miles and the Tigers stung Alabama last season, and this matchup figures to be even bigger. The SEC West seems like a coin flip until these guys play some big-boy football.

2. OHIO STATE AT NEBRASKA, OCT. 8

Love the newness of it — the teams haven't met since 1956 — and the value-added storyline with the Buckeyes' five suspended players eligible for the first time in 2011. Welcome to Lincoln.

3. OREGON AT STANFORD, NOV. 12

Andrew Luck has the best shot of anyone of stopping the Ducks from winning the Pac-12 North. He threw for 341 yards last season against Oregon ... too bad he needed 641 as the Ducks scored 52 points in the final three quarters.

4. OKLAHOMA AT OKLAHOMA STATE, DEC. 3

The Sooners have won eight in a row in the series, which would make it all the more sweet for the Cowboys to perhaps deny OU a shot at the national title while winning the Big 12 title at home.

5. TCU AT BOISE STATE, NOV. 12

These teams will meet in a conference game for the only time, presumably with the Mountain West title on the line. The Frogs and Broncs split close, low-scoring bowl games after the 2008 and 2009 seasons.

6. ALABAMA AT AUBURN, NOV. 26

What shape will Auburn be in at the end of an arduous schedule? Will the Tide need this game for the SEC West title? Can the teams somehow top last season's Iron Bowl comeback thriller?

7. OHIO STATE AT MICHIGAN, NOV. 26

Rich Rodriguez went 0-3 against Ohio State, losing by a combined 76 points. Brady Hoke can't be any worse in his first at-bat.

8. ARKANSAS AT ALABAMA, SEPT. 24

Really, all you have to do is pick any SEC West battle (non-Mississippi edition) and it could make this list. This early game begins to define the race.

9. SOUTH CAROLINA AT GEORGIA, SEPT. 10

There are our top picks in the SEC East, with the loser likely to have to play chase for much, or all, of the season.

10. OKLAHOMA VS. TEXAS, OCT. 8 (DALLAS)

The Longhorns rallied in the final 10 minutes to make last season's game close before fumbling away a final chance in a 28-20 loss in the Red River Rivalry.

11. WISCONSIN AT OHIO STATE, OCT. 29

The Badgers won last season's game and came out ahead in a three-way tiebreaker for the Rose Bowl. Winner here probably takes the Leaders division.

12. MIAMI AT FLORIDA STATE, NOV. 12

Florida State doesn't play Virginia Tech in the regular season, so this will have to do in terms of ACC representation on this list. It will be serious business for the Hurricanes, who can't fall too far behind in the state race.

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SNEAK PEEK

As the first selection was made in the 2011 NFL Draft, our pals over at NFLDraftScout.com — whose work can also be found at CBSSports.com — had already sent us a list of the top 50 prospects for 2012. Underclassmen included.

No surprise at the top. Stanford's Andrew Luck, followed by Oklahoma's Landry Jones. Another underclass quarterback, USC's Matt Barkley, is in the Top 10, too.

The list will be a living, breathing thing, especially once the games begin, but it's always fun to call your shot a year in advance ... and then see how you did.

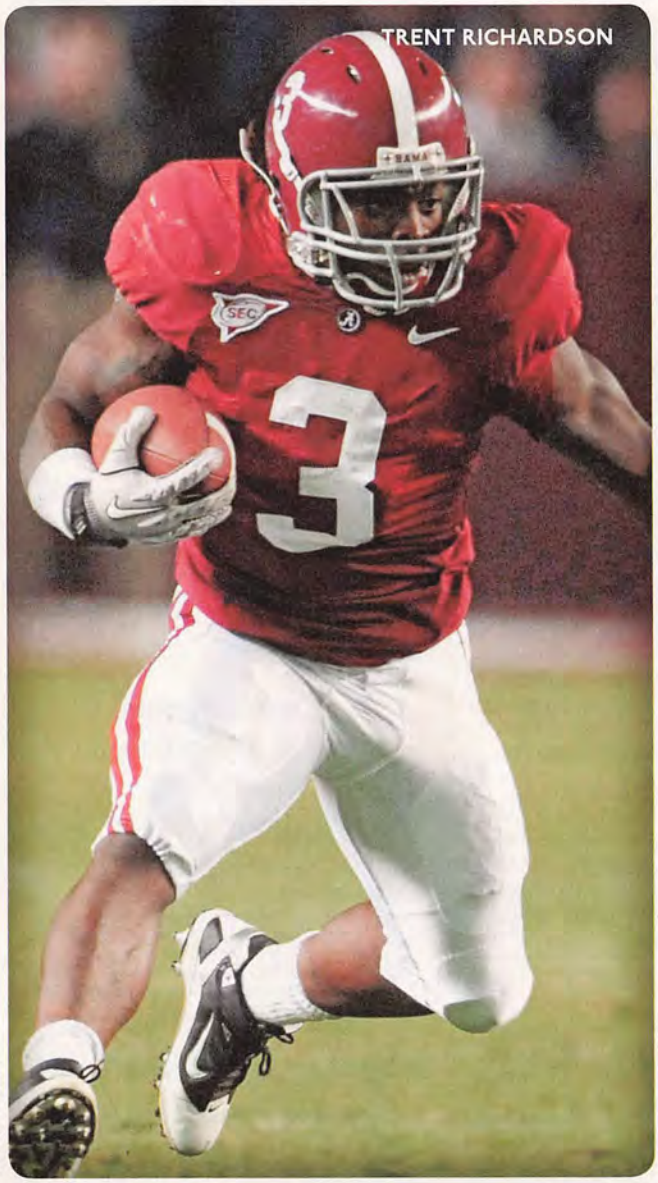
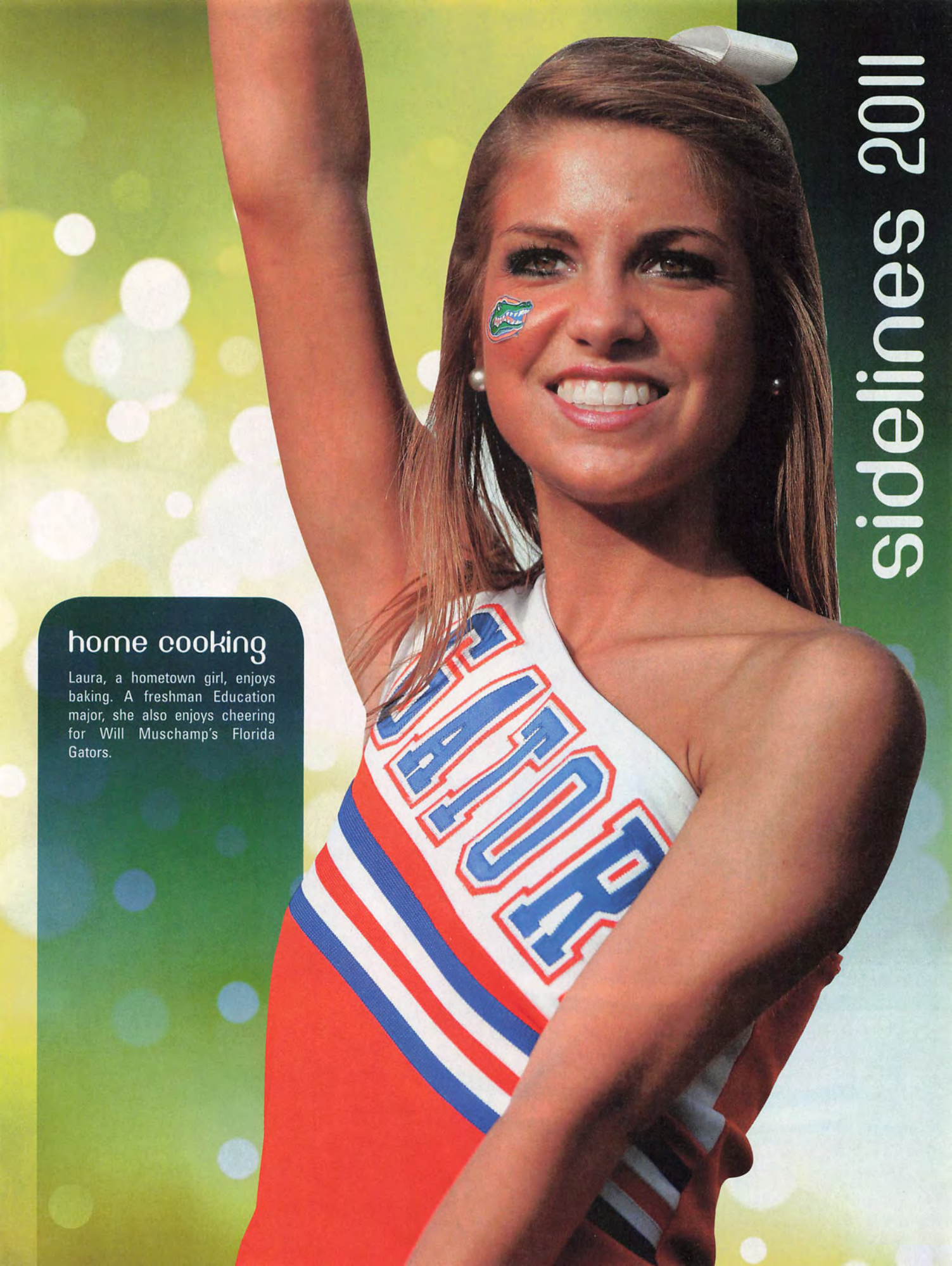

TRENT RICHARDSON

Photo by Joe Robbins

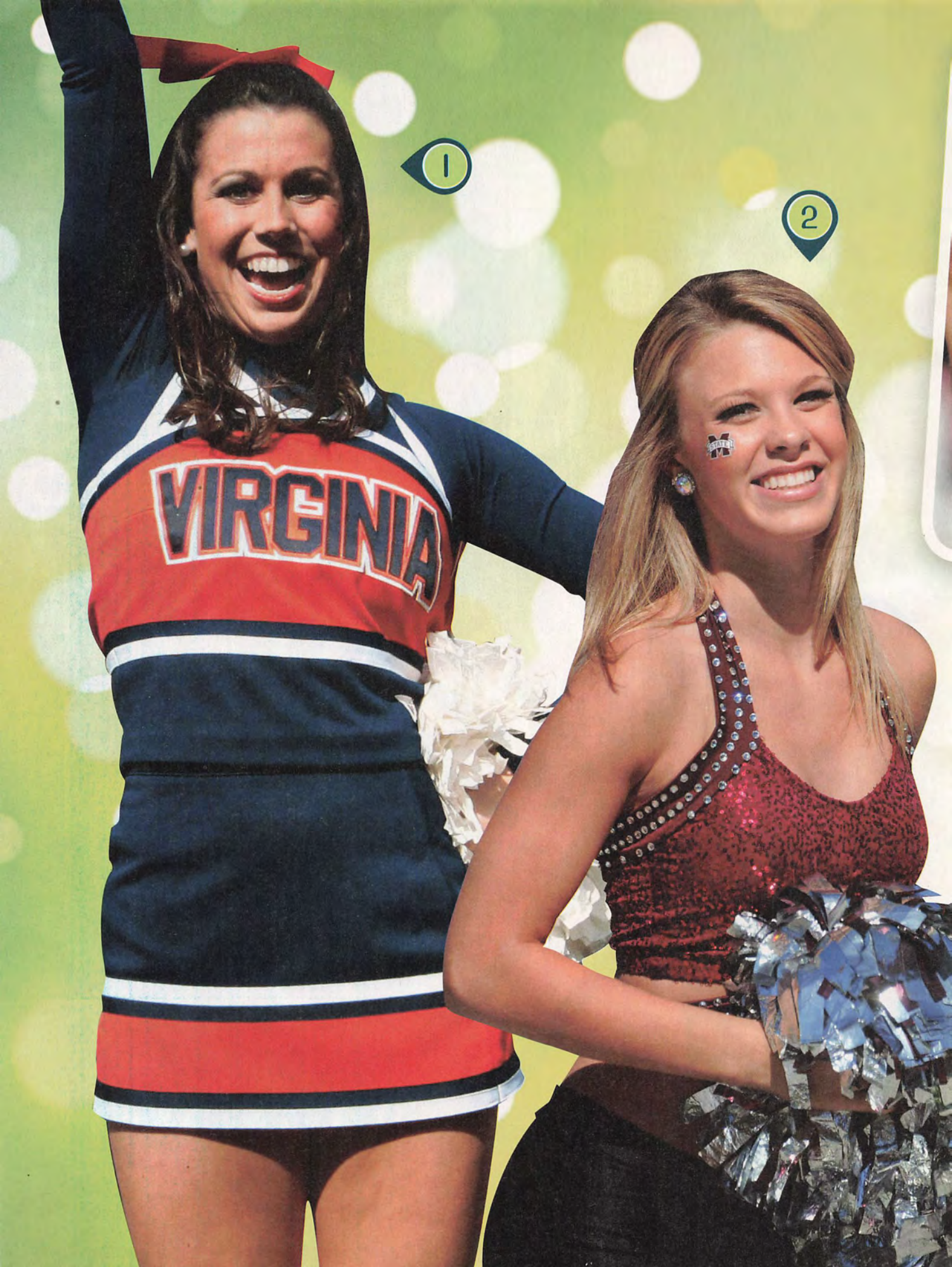
NO.	PLAYER	POS.	SCHOOL
1.	*Andrew Luck	QB	Stanford
2.	*Landry Jones	QB	Oklahoma
3.	*Jonathan Martin	OT	Stanford
4.	*Trent Richardson	RB	Alabama
5.	*Matt Kalil	OT	USC
6.	*Dre Kirkpatrick	CB	Alabama
7.	*Matt Barkley	QB	USC
8.	*Vontaze Burfict	ILB	Arizona State
9.	*Justin Blackmon	WR	Oklahoma State
10.	*Luke Kuechly	ILB	Boston College
11.	*Alshon Jeffrey	WR	South Carolina
12.	Alfonzo Dennard	CB	Nebraska
13.	*Marcus Forston	DT	Miami (FL)
14.	Quinton Coples	DE	North Carolina
15.	Chase Minnifield	CB	Virginia
16.	*Donte Paige-Moss	DE	North Carolina
17.	Michael Floyd	WR	Notre Dame
18.	Zach Brown	OLB	North Carolina
19.	Nate Potter	OT	Boise State
20.	Courtney Upshaw	ILB	Alabama
21.	*Knile Davis	RB	Arkansas
22.	Brandon Lindsey	DE	Pittsburgh
23.	*Cliff Harris	CB	Oregon
24.	Travis Lewis	OLB	Oklahoma
25.	*Robert Lester	FS	Alabama
26.	Jeff Fuller	WR	Texas A&M
27.	Jared Crick	DE	Nebraska
28.	*Manti Te'o	ILB	Notre Dame
29.	*Jerel Worthy	DT	Michigan State
30.	*Dont'a Hightower	ILB	Alabama
31.	*Brandon Jenkins	DE	Florida State
32.	*John Simon	DT	Ohio State
33.	*Stephon Gilmore	CB	South Carolina
34.	Ryan Broyles	WR	Oklahoma
35.	Donnie Fletcher	CB	Boston College
36.	Michael Egnew	TE	Missouri
37.	Kheeston Randall	DT	Texas
38.	*LaMichael James	RB	Oregon
39.	Andre Branch	DE	Clemson
40.	Mike Adams	OT	Ohio State
41.	Nick Foles	QB	Arizona
42.	Omar Bolden	CB	Arizona State
43.	Tydreke Powell	DT	North Carolina
44.	Matt Reynolds	OT	BYU
45.	Bruce Irvin	DE/OLB	West Virginia
46.	Coryell Judie	CB	Texas A&M
47.	Kelechi Osmele	OG	Iowa State
48.	Vinny Curry	DE	Marshall
49.	Mark Barron	SS	Alabama
50.	Dwight Jones	WR	North Carolina

*Underclassman



home cooking

Laura, a hometown girl, enjoys baking. A freshman Education major, she also enjoys cheering for Will Muschamp's Florida Gators.


1
2
VIRGINIA

3

4

5

1. she's quite cavalier

Whether coaching the youth swim team or just running for exercise, Jessica stays busy. But, the Government and English major at Virginia finds time to cheer on the Cavaliers.

2. long way home

Brooke came a long way from Illinois for classes in Starkville. It will be worth it for the freshman Kinesiology major if she can cheer her Bulldogs to the SEC title.

3. reigning royalty

Emilee, captain of the Auburn majorettes, is a junior Civil Engineering major from Athens, Ala. She was chosen Miss Auburn University 2011. It's easy to understand why.

4. tcu showgirl

"Cheering and dancing on the sidelines with my team" is the best part of Caroline's college experience. A Public Relations and Advertising major, she is a member of the TCU Showgirls dance team.

5. fondest desire

Desire' is a member of the University of Texas POM Squad. Her fondest desire for the Longhorns … never having another season like 2010.

6. cash reward

A senior Biological Sciences major from Carrollton, Ga., Casey cheers for the home state Bulldogs. She loves reading, going to movies … and her German shepherd, Cash.

7. hang ten!

Lyndsay, a senior majoring in Elementary Education and Psychology, would like nothing better than for her Nebraska Cornhuskers to win the Big Ten title in its first year in the league.

8. it comes naturally

Since she "grew up in Iowa City around the Hawkeyes," pulling for Iowa comes naturally for Rebecca. A senior cheerleader, she majors in Education with a minor in Dance.

9. come to the cabaret

Spencer, a senior Public Relations major from Gadsden, Ala., is a member of the Crimson Cabaret. She enjoys scuba diving and wants to attend law school.

10. no tide or tigers

Rene, a Birmingham native, is a senior cheerleader for the Georgia Bulldogs. A Broadcast News and Speech Communications major, she enjoys snow skiing and playing golf.

9
10
GEORG

11. all that glitters ...

... is Gold in Baton Rouge. Courtney, a 22-year old Biological Sciences major, is a three-year member of the LSU Tigers' Golden Girls.

12. colorful bruin

Melissa, an Environmental Science major, wears true blue and gold to cheer for her UCLA Bruins. Her favorite color is teal ... and she wants to see the aurora borealis.

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HOWARD BALZER, Lindy's pro football senior editor

Howard Balzer is in his 34th year covering professional football as a writer, editor and broadcaster. His pro football connection began in 1977 with College and Pro Football Newsweekly. Since then he has been a columnist for *The Sporting News, Pro Football Weekly, USA Today Sports Weekly* and The Sports Xchange. The Steelers-Packers Super Bowl was the 31st he has covered.

Balzer was an analyst on ESPN's initial broadcast of the NFL Draft in 1980, and stayed in that role through 1988. He has won six writing awards in the Professional Football Writers of America competition, and also won an Emmy for commentaries on KPLR-TV in 1986. He has provided football analysis for KTVI-TV and Fox Sports Midwest.

Currently, in addition to his work with The Sports Xchange, Balzer is the senior editor for *Lindy's* pro football magazine, a position he has held since 1993; talk-show host for Sirius NFL Radio and 101 ESPN Radio; and an editor-writer for *Gridiron Gateway* magazine.

DON BORST, Lindy's college football and basketball associate editor

Longtime college football writer Don Borst has spent much of the past three decades helping to make *Lindy's* college football and basketball annuals the best in the business. His career stops have included CBSSportsLine.com (managing editor for college sports), ESPN radio and TV, and *The Sporting News*. In his time as a print wretch at the *Tacoma News Tribune* and *Long Beach Press Telegram*, Don covered almost every imaginable sporting event (Olympics, World Series, Super Bowls, Final Fours, Rose Bowls, NBA Finals ... everything, it seems, but hockey). In addition to *Lindy's*, his insights and opinions are readily available during the football season on KJR SportsRadio in Seattle, and on Foxsports.com.

BEN COOK, Lindy's in-house writer/columnist/editor

Ben Cook is an award winning journalist who has been writing sports for over 40 years. During that time he has been an eyewitness to some of the biggest events in sports history. His writing has appeared in several national publications and newspapers. He has covered some of the biggest moments in sports history, as well as almost every major sporting event, including the World Series, the Super Bowl, the Final Four, the Orange Bowl, Sun Bowl, Hall of Fame Bowl, Liberty Bowl, Senior Bowl and 11 Sugar Bowls. He covered Paul Bryant's record-setting 315th coaching victory; Hank Aaron's 715th home run that broke Babe Ruth's record; and the Atlanta Braves victory in the sixth game to win the 1995 World Series over the Cleveland Indians.

He worked for the *Birmingham News*, the *Marietta Daily Journal* in Atlanta, the *SEC Sports Journal*, and the *Birmingham Post-Herald*, where the Scripps-Howard News Service circulated his work nationally. He also worked for WJOX Radio, where he was honored by the Associated Press for the Best Editorial in the state of Alabama three times. His work has appeared in newspapers all across the country, *Sports Illustrated, The Sporting News* and *Event* magazine.

KEN CROSS, Lindy's contributing writer/columnist

Ken has been a sports writer and sports broadcaster covering all major sports for several years. He has worked for ESPN Radio, Fox Sports Radio and Sporting News Radio covering college sports, the National Football League and the National Basketball Association. His work has appeared in *Lindy's* Sports Annuals and on lindyssports.com

He has served as a college basketball reporter covering the Pac-10 and Big 12 for Collegechalktalk.com with weekly columns. He also covers the Carolina Panthers, Carolina Hurricanes and the Charlotte Bobcats, the Southeastern Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference for the Sporting News Radio. He also contributes to the NBA Daily.

ANTHONY GIMINO, Lindy's college football senior editor

Anthony Gimino is the senior editor of *Lindy's* College Football Annuals. He has covered college football for more than two decades as the college football editor of CBS SportsLine.com, the college editor of The Sports Xchange, a beat writer for the *Arizona Daily Star* and a columnist for the *Tucson Citizen*.

ROLAND LAZENBY, Lindy's NBA senior editor

Roland Lazenby, *Lindy's* pro hoops editor for the past 17 years, has what you might call an in-depth relationship with sports.His biography of Jerry West — a Los Angeles Times best-seller — brought to light many revelations about the eccentricities and events that shaped the life of one of the NBA's most celebrated players.

His next book, "MJ: The Life, a biography of Michael Jordan" is scheduled to be published by Little, Brown in late 2012.

Lanzenby has written 50 sports books in his career. He has appeared live twice on ESPN's Sports Center, and has made appearances on CNN, Fox Newschannel, Fox's "Best Damn SportsShow," and ESPN's "Outside the Lines." Lazenby has also appeared on the"NBC Nightly News" and on a CBS Sports special on college basketball. Lazenby has taught college journalism for 20 years at Radford University and Virginia Tech

MATT LOWE, Lindy's in-house editor/writer/columnist

Matt has been working with *Lindy's* for six years, primarily as a writer, covering every sport. He supervises *Lindy's* web site, in addition to being an in-house editor. Matt has covered spring games, SEC Media Days, Auburn and Alabama national championships and has worked on projects pertaining to Super Bowls, World Series, the NCAA Tournament and BCS Championship Games. His work has also appeared on al.com and jsonline.com, which is the *Milwaukee-Journal Sentinel* online.

SHAWN O'NEAL, Lindy's college basketball senior editor

Shawn O'Neal, *Lindy's* College Basketball senior editor, has worked in newspapers around the Northwest since 1990 and served as both the NBA and national college basketball editor for CBS SportsLine.com. His professional focus has been college sports, but he has covered news, politics, the arts and written editorials and general opinion columns. His contributing work includes the Associated Press, *Washington Post* and EA Sports. He currently is on the journalism faculty at the University of Idaho, where he directs student media operations. He has been with *Lindy's* since 1998.

SHANE O'NEILL, Lindy's pro and fantasy baseball senior editor

Shane O'Neill, senior editor for *Lindy's* baseball and fantasy yearbooks since 2002, has been publishing, editing and writing about sports for over 30 years.

A graduate of Seattle University, where he played varsity tennis, O'Neill spent his early career in public relations and concert promotion. In 1981, he founded Preview Publishing (Bill Mazeroski's Baseball, Don Heinrich's Pro Preview, Dick Vitale's Basketball, etc.). He sold his interest in Preview in 1992 and founded Ultimate Sports Publishing a year later. The Ultimate Sports lineup included yearbooks covering the four major professional sports.

O'Neill was also a baseball correspondent for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* from 2005 through 2008.

NICK ROUSSO, Lindy's fantasy baseball editor

Nick Rousso is the editor of *Lindy's* Fantasy Baseball magazine. He was the former sports editor at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and has been the editor of leading sports annuals such as Dick Vitale's Basketball and Don Heinrich's College Football. Rousso also works for the Daily Racing Form as its Northwest correspondent and handicapper.

LYN SCARBROUGH, Lindy's in-house advertising sales/editor/writer

Lyn has been a member of *Lindy's* editorial staff for over 20 years, also serving as a contributing writer, as well as marketing director. A journalism graduate, he worked with *The Birmingham News* and has written for numerous publications.

Lyn was a columnist for *Links* magazine, as well as the basketball editor for *SouthSports*. He wrote for the *SEC Sports Journal* and other sports publications. Lyn is a member of the United States Basketball Writers and Football Writers Associations of America. He has covered everything from ice hockey and swimming to college football, basketball and baseball. He co-authored "The Big Bad Books of Sports" with Ben Cook.

Wrangler NATIONAL SCHEDULES

ACC

BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 3 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 10 at UCF
Sept. 17 DUKE
Sept. 24 MASSACHUSETTS
Oct. 1 WAKE FOREST
Oct. 8 at Clemson
Oct. 22 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 29 at Maryland
Nov. 3 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 12 NC STATE
Nov. 19 at Notre Dame
Nov. 26 at Miami

CLEMSON
Sept. 3 TROY
Sept. 10 WOFFORD
Sept. 17 AUBURN
Sept. 24 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 1 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 8 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 15 at Maryland
Oct. 22 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 29 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 12 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 19 at NC State
Nov. 26 at South Carolina

DUKE
Sept. 3 RICHMOND
Sept. 10 STANFORD
Sept. 17 at Boston College
Sept. 24 TULANE
Oct. 1 at FIU
Oct. 15 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 22 WAKE FOREST
Oct. 29 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 5 at Miami
Nov. 12 at Virginia
Nov. 19 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 26 at North Carolina

FLORIDA STATE
Sept. 3 ULM
Sept. 10 CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Sept. 17 OKLAHOMA
Sept. 24 at Clemson
Oct. 8 at Wake Forest
Oct. 15 at Duke
Oct. 22 MARYLAND
Oct. 29 NC STATE
Nov. 3 at Boston College
Nov. 12 MIAMI
Nov. 19 VIRGINIA
Nov. 26 at Florida

GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 1 WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 10 at Middle Tennessee State
Sept. 17 KANSAS
Sept. 24 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 1 at NC State
Oct. 8 MARYLAND
Oct. 15 at Virginia
Oct. 22 at Miami
Oct. 29 Clemson
Nov. 10 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 19 at Duke
Nov. 26 GEORGIA

MARYLAND
Sept. 5 MIAMI
Sept. 17 WEST VIRGINIA
Sept. 24 TEMPLE
Oct. 1 TOWSON
Oct. 8 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 15 CLEMSON
Oct. 22 at Florida State
Oct. 29 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 5 VIRGINIA
Nov. 12 vs Notre Dame (FedEx Field)
Nov. 19 at Wake Forest
Nov. 26 at NC State

MIAMI
Sept. 5 at Maryland
Sept. 17 OHIO STATE
Sept. 24 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 1 BETHUNE COOKMAN
Oct. 8 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 15 at North Carolina
Oct. 22 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 27 VIRGINIA
Nov. 5 DUKE
Nov. 12 at Florida State
Nov. 19 at South Florida
Nov. 26 BOSTON COLLEGE

NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 3 JAMES MADISON
Sept. 10 RUTGERS
Sept. 17 VIRGINIA
Sept. 24 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 1 at East Carolina
Oct. 8 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 15 MIAMI
Oct. 22 at Clemson
Oct. 29 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 5 at NC State
Nov. 17 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 26 DUKE

NC STATE
Sept. 3 LIBERTY
Sept. 10 at Wake Forest
Sept. 17 SOUTH ALABAMA
Sept. 22 at Cincinnati
Oct. 1 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 8 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 22 at Virginia
Oct. 29 at Florida State
Nov. 5 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 12 at Boston College
Nov. 19 CLEMSON
Nov. 26 MARYLAND

VIRGINIA
Sept. 3 WILLIAM & MARY
Sept. 10 at Indiana
Sept. 17 at North Carolina
Sept. 24 SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Oct. 1 IDAHO
Oct. 15 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 22 NC STATE
Oct. 27 at Miami
Nov. 5 at Maryland
Nov. 12 DUKE
Nov. 19 at Florida State
Nov. 26 VIRGINIA TECH

VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 3 APPALACHIAN STATE
Sept. 10 at East Carolina
Sept. 17 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 24 at Marshall
Oct. 1 CLEMSON
Oct. 8 MIAMI
Oct. 15 at Wake Forest
Oct. 22 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 29 at Duke
Nov. 10 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 17 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 26 at Virginia

WAKE FOREST
Sept. 3 at Syracuse
Sept. 10 NC STATE
Sept. 17 GARDNER-WEBB
Oct. 1 at Boston College
Oct. 8 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 15 VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 22 at Duke
Oct. 29 at North Carolina
Nov. 5 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 12 at Clemson
Nov. 19 MARYLAND
Nov. 26 VANDERBILT

BIG EAST

CINCINNATI
Sept. 1 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 10 at Tennessee
Sept. 17 AKRON
Sept. 22 NC STATE
Oct. 1 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 15 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 22 at South Florida
Nov. 5 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 12 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 19 at Rutgers
Nov. 26 at Syracuse
Dec. 3 CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT
Sept. 1 FORDHAM
Sept. 10 at Vanderbilt
Sept. 16 IOWA STATE
Sept. 24 at Buffalo
Oct. 1 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 8 at West Virginia
Oct. 15 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 26 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 5 SYRACUSE
Nov. 19 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 26 RUTGERS
Dec. 3 at Cincinnati

LOUISVILLE
Sept. 1 MURRAY STATE
Sept. 9 FIU
Sept. 17 at Kentucky
Oct. 1 MARSHALL
Oct. 8 at North Carolina
Oct. 15 at Cincinnati
Oct. 21 RUTGERS
Oct. 29 SYRACUSE
Nov. 5 at West Virginia
Nov. 12 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 19 at Connecticut
Nov. 25 at USF

PITTSBURGH
Sept. 3 BUFFALO
Sept. 10 MAINE
Sept. 17 at Iowa
Sept. 24 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 29 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 8 at Rutgers
Oct. 15 UTAH
Oct. 26 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 5 CINCINNATI
Nov. 12 at Louisville
Nov. 25 at West Virginia
Dec. 3 SYRACUSE

RUTGERS
Sept. 1 NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
Sept. 10 at North Carolina
Sept. 24 OHIO
Oct. 1 at Syracuse
Oct. 8 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 15 NAVY
Oct. 21 at Louisville
Oct. 29 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 5 SOUTH FLORIDA
Nov. 12 vs. Army (Yankee Stadium)
Nov. 19 CINCINNATI
Nov. 26 at Connecticut

SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 3 at Notre Dame
Sept. 10 BALL STATE
Sept. 17 FLORIDA A&M
Sept. 24 UTEP
Sept. 29 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 15 at Connecticut
Oct. 22 CINCINNATI
Nov. 5 at Rutgers
Nov. 11 at Syracuse
Nov. 19 MIAMI
Nov. 25 LOUISVILLE
Dec. 1 WEST VIRGINIA

SYRACUSE
Sept. 3 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 10 RHODE ISLAND
Sept. 17 at USC
Sept. 24 TOLEDO
Oct. 1 RUTGERS
Oct. 8 at Tulane
Oct. 22 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 29 at Louisville
Nov. 5 at Connecticut
Nov. 11 SOUTH FLORIDA
Nov. 26 CINCINNATI
Dec. 3 at Pittsburgh

WEST VIRGINIA
Sept. 3 MARSHALL
Sept. 10 NORFOLK STATE
Sept. 17 at Maryland
Sept. 24 LSU
Oct. 1 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 8 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 22 at Syracuse
Oct. 29 at Rutgers
Nov. 5 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 12 at Cincinnati
Nov. 25 PITTSBURGH
Dec. 1 at South Florida

BIG TEN

ILLINOIS
Sept. 3 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 10 SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
Sept. 17 ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 24 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 1 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 8 at Indiana
Oct. 15 OHIO STATE
Oct. 22 at Purdue
Oct. 29 at Penn State
Nov. 12 MICHIGAN
Nov. 19 WISCONSIN
Nov. 26 at Minnesota

INDIANA
Sept. 3 vs. Ball State (Indianapolis)
Sept. 10 VIRGINIA
Sept. 17 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Sept. 24 at North Texas
Oct. 1 PENN STATE
Oct. 8 ILLINOIS
Oct. 15 at Wisconsin
Oct. 22 at Iowa
Oct. 29 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 5 at Ohio State
Nov. 19 at Michigan State
Nov. 26 PURDUE

IOWA
Sept. 3 TENNESSEE TECH
Sept. 10 at Iowa State
Sept. 17 PITTSBURGH
Sept. 24 ULM
Oct. 8 at Penn State
Oct. 15 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 22 INDIANA
Oct. 29 at Minnesota
Nov. 5 MICHIGAN
Nov. 12 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 19 at Purdue
Nov. 26 at Nebraska

MICHIGAN
Sept. 3 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 10 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 17 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 24 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 1 MINNESOTA
Oct. 8 at Northwestern
Oct. 15 at Michigan State
Oct. 29 PURDUE
Nov. 5 at Iowa
Nov. 12 at Illinois
Nov. 19 NEBRASKA
Nov. 26 OHIO STATE

MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 3 YOUNGSTOWN STATE
Sept. 10 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 17 at Notre Dame
Sept. 24 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 1 at Ohio State
Oct. 15 MICHIGAN
Oct. 22 WISCONSIN
Oct. 29 at Nebraska
Nov. 5 MINNESOTA
Nov. 12 at Iowa
Nov. 19 INDIANA
Nov. 26 at Northwestern

MINNESOTA
Sept. 3 at USC
Sept. 10 NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 17 MIAMI (Ohio)
Sept. 24 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Oct. 1 at Michigan
Oct. 8 at Purdue
Oct. 22 NEBRASKA
Oct. 29 IOWA
Nov. 5 at Michigan State
Nov. 12 WISCONSIN
Nov. 19 at Northwestern
Nov. 26 ILLINOIS

NEBRASKA
Sept. 3 TENNESSEE-CHATTANOOGA
Sept. 10 FRESNO STATE
Sept. 17 WASHINGTON
Sept. 24 at Wyoming
Oct. 1 at Wisconsin
Oct. 8 OHIO STATE
Oct. 22 at Minnesota
Oct. 29 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 5 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 12 at Penn State
Nov. 19 at Michigan
Nov. 25 IOWA

NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 3 at Boston College
Sept. 10 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 17 at Army
Oct. 1 at Illinois
Oct. 8 MICHIGAN
Oct. 15 at Iowa
Oct. 22 PENN STATE
Oct. 29 at Indiana
Nov. 5 at Nebraska
Nov. 12 RICE
Nov. 19 MINNESOTA
Nov. 26 MICHIGAN STATE

OHIO STATE
Sept. 3 AKRON
Sept. 10 TOLEDO
Sept. 17 at Miami
Sept. 24 COLORADO
Oct. 1 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 8 at Nebraska
Oct. 15 at Illinois
Oct. 29 WISCONSIN
Nov. 5 INDIANA
Nov. 12 at Purdue
Nov. 19 PENN STATE
Nov. 26 at Michigan

PENN STATE
Sept. 3 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 10 ALABAMA
Sept. 17 at Temple
Sept. 24 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 1 at Indiana
Oct. 8 IOWA
Oct. 15 PURDUE
Oct. 22 at Northwestern
Oct. 29 ILLINOIS
Nov. 12 NEBRASKA
Nov. 19 at Ohio State
Nov. 26 at Wisconsin

PURDUE
Sept. 3 MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE
Sept. 10 at Rice
Sept. 17 SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE
Oct. 1 NOTRE DAME
Oct. 8 MINNESOTA
Oct. 15 at Penn State
Oct. 22 ILLINOIS
Oct. 29 at Michigan
Nov. 5 at Wisconsin
Nov. 12 OHIO STATE
Nov. 19 IOWA
Nov. 26 at Indiana

WISCONSIN
Sept. 3 UNLV
Sept. 10 OREGON STATE
Sept. 17 vs. Northern Illinois (Soldier Field)
Sept. 24 SOUTH DAKOTA
Oct. 1 NEBRASKA
Oct. 15 INDIANA
Oct. 22 at Michigan State
Oct. 29 at Ohio State
Nov. 5 PURDUE
Nov. 12 at Minnesota
Nov. 19 at Illinois
Nov. 26 PENN STATE

BIG 12

BAYLOR
Sept. 2 TCU
Sept. 17 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 24 RICE
Oct. 1 at Kansas State
Oct. 8 IOWA STATE
Oct. 15 at Texas A&M
Oct. 29 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 5 MISSOURI
Nov. 12 at Kansas
Nov. 19 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 26 vs. Texas Tech (Arlington)
Dec. 3 TEXAS

IOWA STATE
Sept. 3 NORTHERN IOWA
Sept. 10 IOWA
Sept. 16 at Connecticut
Oct. 1 TEXAS
Oct. 8 at Baylor
Oct. 15 at Missouri
Oct. 22 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 29 at Texas Tech
Nov. 5 KANSAS
Nov. 12 at Oklahoma
Nov. 19 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 26 at Kansas State

KANSAS
Sept. 3 McNEESE STATE
Sept. 10 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 17 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 1 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 8 at Oklahoma State
Oct. 15 OKLAHOMA
Oct. 22 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 29 at Texas
Nov. 5 at Iowa State
Nov. 12 BAYLOR
Nov. 19 at Texas A&M
Nov. 26 vs. Missouri (Kansas City)

KANSAS STATE
Sept. 3 EASTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 17 KENT STATE
Sept. 24 at Miami
Oct. 1 BAYLOR
Oct. 8 MISSOURI
Oct. 15 at Texas Tech
Oct. 22 at Kansas
Oct. 29 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 5 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 12 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 19 at Texas
Nov. 26 IOWA STATE

MISSOURI
Sept. 3 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 10 at Arizona State
Sept. 17 WESTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 24 at Oklahoma
Oct. 8 at Kansas State
Oct. 15 IOWA STATE
Oct. 22 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 29 at Texas A&M
Nov. 5 at Baylor
Nov. 12 TEXAS
Nov. 19 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 26 vs. Kansas (Kansas City)

OKLAHOMA
Sept. 17 at Florida State
Sept. 24 MISSOURI
Oct. 1 BALL STATE
Oct. 5 vs. Texas (Dallas)
Oct. 15 at Kansas
Oct. 22 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 29 at Kansas State
Nov. 5 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 12 IOWA STATE
Nov. 19 at Baylor
Dec. 3 at Oklahoma State

OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 3 LOUISIANA
Sept. 8 ARIZONA
Sept. 17 at Tulsa
Sept. 24 at Texas A&M
Oct. 8 KANSAS
Oct. 15 at Texas
Oct. 22 at Missouri
Oct. 29 BAYLOR
Nov. 5 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 12 at Texas Tech
Nov. 19 at Iowa State
Nov. 26 OKLAHOMA

TEXAS
Sept. 3 RICE
Sept. 10 BYU
Sept. 17 at UCLA

Wrangler NATIONAL SCHEDULES

Oct. 1 at Iowa State
Oct. 8 vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)
Oct. 15 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 29 KANSAS
Nov. 5 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 12 at Missouri
Nov. 19 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 24 at Texas A&M
Dec. 3 at Baylor

TEXAS A&M

Sept. 3 SMU
Sept. 17 IDAHO
Sept. 24 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 1 vs. Arkansas (Arlington)
Oct. 8 at Texas Tech
Oct. 15 BAYLOR
Oct. 22 at Iowa State
Oct. 29 MISSOURI
Nov. 5 at Oklahoma
Nov. 12 at Kansas State
Nov. 19 KANSAS
Nov. 24 TEXAS

TEXAS TECH

Sept. 3 TEXAS STATE
Sept. 17 at New Mexico
Sept. 24 NEVADA
Oct. 1 at Kansas
Oct. 8 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 15 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 22 at Oklahoma
Oct. 29 IOWA STATE
Nov. 5 at Texas
Nov. 12 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 19 at Missouri
Nov. 26 vs. Baylor (Arlington)

C-USA

EAST CAROLINA

Sept. 3 vs. South Carolina (Charlotte)
Sept. 10 VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 24 UAB
Oct. 1 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 8 at Houston
Oct. 15 at Memphis
Oct. 22 at Navy
Oct. 29 TULANE
Nov. 5 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 12 at UTEP
Nov. 19 UCF
Nov. 26 at Marshall

HOUSTON

Sept. 3 UCLA
Sept. 10 at North Texas
Sept. 17 at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 24 GEORGIA STATE
Oct. 1 at UTEP
Oct. 8 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 22 MARSHALL
Oct. 29 RICE
Nov. 5 at UAB
Nov. 12 at Tulane
Nov. 19 SMU
Nov. 26 at Tulsa

MARSHALL

Sept. 3 at West Virginia
Sept. 10 SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 17 at Ohio
Sept. 24 VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 1 at Louisville
Oct. 8 at UCF
Oct. 15 RICE
Oct. 22 at Houston
Oct. 29 UAB
Nov. 12 at Tulsa
Nov. 19 at Memphis
Nov. 26 EAST CAROLINA

MEMPHIS

Sept. 1 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 10 at Arkansas State
Sept. 17 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 24 SMU
Oct. 1 at Middle Tennessee State
Oct. 8 at Rice
Oct. 15 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 22 at Tulane
Oct. 29 at UCF
Nov. 12 UAB
Nov. 19 MARSHALL
Nov. 26 at Southern Miss

RICE

Sept. 3 at Texas
Sept. 10 PURDUE
Sept. 17 at Baylor
Sept. 24 at Southern Miss
Oct. 1 MEMPHIS
Oct. 8 at Marshall
Oct. 15 TULSA
Oct. 22 at Houston
Nov. 5 UTEP
Nov. 12 at Northwestern
Nov. 19 TULANE
Nov. 26 at SMU

SMU

Sept. 3 at Texas A&M
Sept. 10 UTEP
Sept. 17 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 24 at Memphis
Oct. 1 at TCU
Oct. 15 UCF
Oct. 22 at Southern Miss
Oct. 29 at Tulsa
Nov. 5 TULANE
Nov. 12 NAVY
Nov. 19 at Houston
Nov. 26 RICE

SOUTHERN MISS

Sept. 3 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 10 at Marshall
Sept. 17 SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Sept. 24 at Virginia
Oct. 1 RICE
Oct. 8 at Navy
Oct. 22 SMU
Oct. 29 at UTEP
Nov. 5 at East Carolina
Nov. 12 UCF
Nov. 19 at UAB
Nov. 26 MEMPHIS

TULANE

Sept. 3 SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Sept. 10 TULSA
Sept. 17 at UAB
Sept. 24 at Duke
Oct. 1 at Army
Oct. 8 SYRACUSE
Oct. 15 UTEP
Oct. 22 MEMPHIS
Oct. 29 at East Carolina
Nov. 5 at SMU
Nov. 12 HOUSTON
Nov. 19 at Rice
Nov. 26 at Hawaii

TULSA

Sept. 3 at Oklahoma
Sept. 10 at Tulane
Sept. 17 OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 24 at Boise State
Oct. 1 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 15 UAB
Oct. 22 at Rice
Oct. 29 SMU
Nov. 5 at UCF
Nov. 12 MARSHALL
Nov. 19 at UTEP
Nov. 26 Houston

UAB

Sept. 10 at Florida
Sept. 17 Tulane
Sept. 24 at East Carolina
Oct. 1 at Troy
Oct. 8 Mississippi State
Oct. 15 at Tulsa
Oct. 22 UCF
Oct. 29 at Marshall
Nov. 5 Houston
Nov. 12 at Memphis
Nov. 19 Southern Miss
Nov. 26 at Florida Atlantic

UCF

Sept. 3 CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Sept. 10 BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 17 at Florida International
Sept. 23 at BYU
Oct. 8 MARSHALL
Oct. 15 at SMU
Oct. 22 at UAB
Oct. 29 MEMPHIS
Nov. 5 TULSA
Nov. 12 at Southern Miss
Nov. 19 at East Carolina
Nov. 26 UTEP

UTEP

Sept. 3 STONY BROOK
Sept. 10 at SMU
Sept. 17 at New Mexico State
Sept. 24 at South Florida
Oct. 1 HOUSTON
Oct. 15 at Tulane
Oct. 22 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 29 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 5 at Rice
Nov. 12 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 19 TULSA
Nov. 26 at UCF

1-A INDEPENDENTS

ARMY

Sept. 3 at Northern Illinois
Sept. 10 SAN DIEGO STATE
Sept. 17 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 24 at Ball State
Oct. 1 TULANE
Oct. 8 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 22 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 29 FORDHAM
Nov. 5 at Air Force
Nov. 12 vs. Rutgers (Yankee Stadium)
Nov. 19 at Temple
Dec. 10 vs. Navy (FedEx Field)

BYU

Sept. 3 at Ole Miss
Sept. 10 at Texas
Sept. 17 UTAH
Sept. 23 UCF
Sept. 30 UTAH STATE
Oct. 8 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 15 at Oregon State
Oct. 22 IDAHO STATE
Oct. 28 vs. TCU
Nov. 12 IDAHO
Nov. 19 NEW MEXICO STATE
Dec. 3 at Hawaii

NAVY

Sept. 3 DELAWARE
Sept. 10 at Western Kentucky
Sept. 17 at South Carolina
Oct. 1 AIR FORCE
Oct. 8 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 15 at Rutgers
Oct. 22 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 29 at Notre Dame
Nov. 5 TROY
Nov. 12 at SMU
Nov. 19 at San Jose State
Dec. 10 vs. Army (Fed ExField)

NOTRE DAME

Sept. 3 vs. USF
Sept. 10 at Michigan
Sept. 17 MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 24 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 1 at Purdue
Oct. 8 AIR FORCE
Oct. 22 USC
Oct. 29 NAVY
Nov. 5 at Wake Forest
Nov. 12 vs. Maryland (Fed ExField)
Nov. 19 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 26 at Stanford

MAC

AKRON

Sept. 3 at Ohio State
Sept. 10 TEMPLE
Sept. 17 at Cincinnati
Sept. 24 VMI
Oct. 1 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 8 FIU
Oct. 22 OHIO
Oct. 29 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 3 at Miami (Ohio)
Nov. 12 KENT STATE
Nov. 19 at Buffalo
Nov. 25 at Western Michigan

BALL STATE

Sept. 3 vs. Indiana (Indianapolis)
Sept. 10 at South Florida
Sept. 17 BUFFALO
Sept. 24 ARMY
Oct. 1 at Oklahoma
Oct. 8 TEMPLE
Oct. 15 at Ohio
Oct. 22 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 29 at Western Michigan
Nov. 5 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 15 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 25 TOLEDO

BOWLING GREEN

Sept. 1 at Idaho
Sept. 10 MORGAN STATE
Sept. 17 WYOMING
Sept. 24 at Miami (Ohio)
Oct. 1 at West Virginia
Oct. 8 at Western Michigan
Oct. 15 TOLEDO
Oct. 22 TEMPLE
Oct. 29 at Kent State
Nov. 8 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 16 OHIO
Nov. 25 at Buffalo

BUFFALO

Sept. 3 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 10 STONY BROOK
Sept. 17 at Ball State
Sept. 24 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 1 at Tennessee
Oct. 8 OHIO
Oct. 15 at Temple
Oct. 22 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 29 at Miami (Ohio)
Nov. 12 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 19 AKRON
Nov. 25 BOWLING GREEN

CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Sept. 1 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Sept. 10 at Kentucky
Sept. 17 at Western Michigan
Sept. 24 at Michigan State
Oct. 1 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 8 at North Carolina State
Oct. 15 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 22 at Ball State
Oct. 29 at Akron
Nov. 4 at Kent State
Nov. 10 OHIO
Nov. 18 TOLEDO

EASTERN MICHIGAN

Sept. 3 HOWARD
Sept. 10 ALABAMA STATE
Sept. 17 at Michigan
Sept. 24 at Penn State
Oct. 1 AKRON
Oct. 8 at Toledo
Oct. 15 at Central Michigan
Oct. 22 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 5 BALL STATE
Nov. 12 BUFFALO
Nov. 19 at Kent State
Nov. 25 at Northern Illinois

KENT STATE

Sept. 3 at Alabama
Sept. 10 LOUISIANA
Sept. 17 at Kansas State
Sept. 24 SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 1 at Ohio
Oct. 8 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 15 MIAMI
Oct. 29 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 4 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 12 at Akron
Nov. 19 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 25 at Temple

MIAMI (OHIO)

Sept. 3 at Missouri
Sept. 17 at Minnesota
Sept. 24 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 1 CINCINNATI
Oct. 8 ARMY
Oct. 15 at Kent State
Oct. 29 at Toledo
Sept. 17 BUFFALO
Nov. 3 AKRON
Nov. 9 at Temple
Nov. 16 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 22 at Ohio

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Sept. 3 ARMY
Sept. 10 at Kansas
Sept. 17 vs. Wisconsin (Soldier Field)
Sept. 24 CAL POLY
Oct. 1 at Central Michigan
Oct. 8 KENT STATE
Oct. 15 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 22 at Buffalo
Nov. 1 at Toledo
Nov. 8 at Bowling Green
Nov. 15 BALL STATE
Nov. 25 EASTERN MICHIGAN

OHIO

Sept. 3 at New Mexico State
Sept. 10 GARDNER-WEBB
Sept. 17 MARSHALL
Sept. 24 at Rutgers
Oct. 1 KENT STATE
Oct. 8 at Buffalo
Oct. 15 BALL STATE
Oct. 22 at Akron
Nov. 2 TEMPLE
Nov. 10 at Central Michigan
Nov. 16 at Bowling Green
Nov. 22 MIAMI (OH)

TEMPLE

Sept. 1 VILLANOVA
Sept. 10 at Akron
Sept. 17 PENN STATE
Sept. 24 at Maryland
Oct. 1 TOLEDO
Oct. 8 at Ball State
Oct. 15 BUFFALO
Oct. 22 at Bowling Green
Nov. 2 at Ohio
Nov. 9 MIAMI (Ohio)
Nov. 19 ARMY
Nov. 25 KENT STATE

TOLEDO

Sept. 1 NEW HAMPSHIRE
Sept. 10 at Ohio State
Sept. 17 BOISE STATE
Sept. 24 at Syracuse
Oct. 1 at Temple
Oct. 8 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 15 at Bowling Green
Oct. 22 MIAMI
Nov. 1 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 8 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 18 at Central Michigan
Nov. 25 at Ball State

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Sept. 3 at Michigan
Sept. 10 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 17 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 24 at Illinois
Oct. 1 at Connecticut
Oct. 8 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 15 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 22 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 29 BALL STATE
Nov. 8 at Toledo
Nov. 16 at Miami (Ohio)
Nov. 25 AKRON

MOUNTAIN WEST

AIR FORCE

Sept. 3 SOUTH DAKOTA
Sept. 10 TCU
Sept. 24 TENNESSEE STATE
Oct. 1 at Navy
Oct. 8 at Notre Dame
Oct. 15 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 22 at Boise State
Oct. 29 at New Mexico
Nov. 5 ARMY
Nov. 12 WYOMING
Nov. 19 UNLV
Nov. 26 at Colorado State

BOISE STATE

Sept. 3 vs. Georgia (Atlanta)
Sept. 17 at Toledo
Sept. 24 TULSA
Oct. 1 NEVADA
Oct. 8 at Fresno State
Oct. 15 at Colorado State
Oct. 22 AIR FORCE
Nov. 5 at UNLV
Nov. 12 TCU
Nov. 19 at San Diego State
Nov. 26 WYOMING
Dec. 3 NEW MEXICO

COLORADO STATE

Sept. 3 at New Mexico
Sept. 10 NORTHERN COLORADO
Sept. 17 vs. Colorado (Denver)
Sept. 24 at Utah State
Oct. 1 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 15 BOISE STATE
Oct. 22 at UTEP
Oct. 29 at UNLV
Nov. 12 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 19 at TCU
Nov. 26 AIR FORCE
Dec. 3 WYOMING

NEW MEXICO

Sept. 3 COLORADO STATE
Sept. 10 vs. Arkansas (Little Rock)
Sept. 17 TEXAS TECH
Sept. 24 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Oct. 1 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 15 at Nevada
Oct. 22 at TCU
Oct. 29 AIR FORCE
Nov. 5 at San Diego State
Nov. 12 UNLV
Nov. 19 at Wyoming
Dec. 3 at Boise State

SAN DIEGO STATE

Sept. 3 CAL POLY
Sept. 10 at Army
Sept. 17 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 24 at Michigan
Oct. 8 TCU
Oct. 13 at Air Force
Oct. 29 WYOMING
Nov. 5 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 12 at Colorado State
Nov. 19 BOISE STATE
Nov. 26 at UNLV
Dec. 3 FRESNO STATE

TCU

Sept. 3 at Baylor
Sept. 10 at Air Force
Sept. 17 ULM
Sept. 24 PORTLAND STATE
Oct. 1 SMU
Oct. 8 at San Diego State
Oct. 22 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 28 vs. BYU
Nov. 5 at Wyoming
Nov. 12 at Boise State
Nov. 19 COLORADO STATE
Dec. 3 UNLV

UNLV

Sept. 3 at Wisconsin
Sept. 10 at Washington State
Sept. 17 HAWAII
Sept. 24 SOUTHERN UTAH
Oct. 8 at Nevada
Oct. 15 at Wyoming
Oct. 29 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 5 BOISE STATE
Nov. 12 at New Mexico
Nov. 19 at Air Force
Nov. 26 SAN DIEGO STATE
Dec. 3 at TCU

WYOMING

Sept. 3 WEBER STATE
Sept. 10 TEXAS STATE
Sept. 17 at Bowling Green
Sept. 24 NEBRASKA
Oct. 8 at Utah State
Oct. 15 UNLV
Oct. 29 at San Diego State
Nov. 5 TCU
Nov. 12 at Air Force
Nov. 19 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 26 at Boise State
Dec. 3 at Colorado State

PAC-12

ARIZONA

Sept. 3 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 8 at Oklahoma State
Sept. 17 STANFORD
Sept. 24 OREGON
Oct. 1 at USC
Oct. 8 at Oregon State
Oct. 20 UCLA
Oct. 29 at Washington
Nov. 5 UTAH
Nov. 12 at Colorado
Nov. 19 at Arizona State
Nov. 26 LOUISIANA

Wrangler NATIONAL SCHEDULES

ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 1 UC DAVIS
Sept. 9 MISSOURI
Sept. 17 at Illinois
Sept. 24 USC
Oct. 1 OREGON STATE
Oct. 8 at Utah
Oct. 15 at Oregon
Oct. 29 COLORADO
Nov. 5 at UCLA
Nov. 12 at Washington State
Nov. 19 ARIZONA
Nov. 26 CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA
Sept. 3 vs. Fresno State (San Francisco)
Sept. 10 at Colorado
Sept. 17 PRESBYTERIAN
Sept. 24 at Washington
Oct. 6 at Oregon
Oct. 13 USC
Oct. 22 UTAH
Oct. 29 at UCLA
Nov. 5 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 12 OREGON STATE
Nov. 19 at Stanford
Nov. 26 at Arizona State

COLORADO
Sept. 3 at Hawaii
Sept. 10 CALIFORNIA
Sept. 17 vs. Colorado State (Denver)
Sept. 24 at Ohio State
Oct. 1 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 8 at Stanford
Oct. 15 at Washington
Oct. 22 OREGON
Oct. 29 at Arizona State
Nov. 5 USC
Nov. 12 ARIZONA
Nov. 19 at UCLA
Nov. 26 at Utah

OREGON
Sept. 3 vs. LSU (Arlington)
Sept. 10 NEVADA
Sept. 17 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 24 at Arizona
Oct. 6 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 15 ARIZONA STATE
Oct. 22 at Colorado
Oct. 29 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 5 at Washington
Nov. 12 at Stanford
Nov. 19 USC
Nov. 26 OREGON STATE

OREGON STATE
Sept. 3 SACRAMENTO STATE
Sept. 10 at Wisconsin
Sept. 24 UCLA
Oct. 1 at Arizona State
Oct. 8 ARIZONA
Oct. 15 BYU
Oct. 22 vs. Washington State
Oct. 29 at Utah
Nov. 5 STANFORD
Nov. 12 at California
Nov. 19 WASHINGTON
Nov. 26 at Oregon

STANFORD
Sept. 3 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 10 at Duke
Sept. 17 at Arizona
Oct. 1 UCLA
Oct. 8 COLORADO
Oct. 15 at Washington State
Oct. 22 WASHINGTON
Oct. 29 at USC
Nov. 5 at Oregon State
Nov. 12 OREGON
Nov. 19 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 26 NOTRE DAME

UCLA
Sept. 3 at Houston
Sept. 10 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 17 TEXAS
Sept. 24 at Oregon State
Oct. 1 at Stanford
Oct. 8 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 20 at Arizona
Oct. 29 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 5 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 12 at Utah
Nov. 19 COLORADO
Nov. 26 at USC

USC
Sept. 3 MINNESOTA
Sept. 10 UTAH
Sept. 17 SYRACUSE
Sept. 24 at Arizona State
Oct. 1 ARIZONA
Oct. 13 at California
Oct. 22 at Notre Dame
Oct. 29 STANFORD
Nov. 5 at Colorado
Nov. 12 WASHINGTON
Nov. 19 at Oregon
Nov. 26 UCLA

UTAH
Sept. 1 MONTANA STATE
Sept. 10 at USC
Sept. 17 at BYU
Oct. 1 WASHINGTON
Oct. 8 ARIZONA STATE
Oct. 15 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 22 at California
Oct. 29 OREGON STATE
Nov. 5 at Arizona
Nov. 12 UCLA
Nov. 19 at Washington State
Nov. 26 COLORADO

WASHINGTON
Sept. 3 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 10 HAWAII
Sept. 17 at Nebraska
Sept. 24 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 1 at Utah
Oct. 15 COLORADO
Oct. 22 at Stanford
Oct. 29 ARIZONA
Nov. 5 OREGON
Nov. 12 at USC
Nov. 19 at Oregon State
Nov. 26 vs. Washington State (Qwest Field)

WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 3 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 10 UNLV
Sept. 17 at San Diego State
Oct. 1 at Colorado
Oct. 8 UCLA
Oct. 15 STANFORD
Oct. 22 vs. Oregon State (Seattle)
Oct. 29 at Oregon
Nov. 5 at California
Nov. 12 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 19 UTAH
Nov. 26 vs. Washington (Qwest Field)

SEC

ALABAMA
Sept. 3 KENT STATE
Sept. 10 at Penn State
Sept. 17 North Texas
Sept. 24 ARKANSAS
Oct. 1 at Florida
Oct. 8 VANDERBILT
Oct. 15 at Ole Miss
Oct. 22 TENNESSEE
Nov. 5 LSU
Nov. 12 at Mississippi State
Nov. 19 GEORGIA SOUTHERN
Nov. 26 at Auburn

ARKANSAS
Sept. 3 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 10 vs. New Mexico (Little Rock)
Sept. 17 TROY
Sept. 24 at Alabama
Oct. 1 vs. Texas A&M (Arlington)
Oct. 8 AUBURN
Oct. 22 at Ole Miss
Oct. 29 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 5 SOUTH CAROLINA
Nov. 12 TENNESSEE
Nov. 19 vs. Mississippi State (Little Rock)
Nov. 25 at LSU

AUBURN
Sept. 3 UTAH STATE
Sept. 10 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 17 at Clemson
Sept. 24 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 1 at South Carolina
Oct. 8 at Arkansas
Oct. 15 FLORIDA
Oct. 22 at LSU
Oct. 29 OLE MISS
Nov. 12 at Georgia
Nov. 19 SAMFORD
Nov. 26 ALABAMA

FLORIDA
Sept. 3 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 10 UAB
Sept. 17 TENNESSEE
Sept. 24 at Kentucky
Oct. 1 ALABAMA
Oct. 8 at LSU
Oct. 15 at Auburn
Oct. 29 vs. Georgia
Nov. 5 VANDERBILT
Nov. 12 at South Carolina
Nov. 19 FURMAN
Nov. 26 FLORIDA STATE

GEORGIA
Sept. 3 vs. Boise State (Atlanta)
Sept. 10 SOUTH CAROLINA
Sept. 17 COASTAL CAROLINA
Sept. 24 at Ole Miss
Oct. 1 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Oct. 8 at Tennessee
Oct. 15 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 29 vs. Florida (Jacksonville)
Nov. 5 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 12 AUBURN
Nov. 19 KENTUCKY
Nov. 26 at Georgia Tech

KENTUCKY
Sept. 1 vs. Western Kentucky (Nashville)
Sept. 10 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 17 LOUISVILLE
Sept. 24 FLORIDA
Oct. 1 at LSU
Oct. 8 at South Carolina
Oct. 22 JACKSONVILLE STATE
Oct. 29 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 5 OLE MISS
Nov. 12 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 19 at Georgia
Nov. 26 TENNESSEE

LSU
Sept. 3 vs. Oregon (Arlington)
Sept. 10 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 15 at Mississippi State
Sept. 24 at West Virginia
Oct. 1 KENTUCKY
Oct. 8 FLORIDA
Oct. 15 at Tennessee
Oct. 22 AUBURN
Nov. 5 at Alabama
Nov. 12 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 19 at Ole Miss
Nov. 25 ARKANSAS

OLE MISS
Sept. 3 BYU
Sept. 10 SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 17 at Vanderbilt
Sept. 24 GEORGIA
Oct. 1 at Fresno State
Oct. 15 ALABAMA
Oct. 22 ARKANSAS
Oct. 29 at Auburn
Nov. 5 at Kentucky
Nov. 12 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 19 LSU
Nov. 26 at Mississippi State

MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 3 at Memphis
Sept. 10 at Auburn
Sept. 15 LSU
Sept. 24 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 1 at Georgia
Oct. 8 at UAB
Oct. 15 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 29 at Kentucky
Nov. 5 TENNESSEE MARTIN
Nov. 12 ALABAMA
Nov. 19 vs. Arkansas (Little Rock)
Nov. 26 OLE MISS

SOUTH CAROLINA
Sept. 3 vs. East Carolina (Charlotte)
Sept. 10 at Georgia
Sept. 17 NAVY
Sept. 24 VANDERBILT
Oct. 1 AUBURN
Oct. 8 KENTUCKY
Oct. 15 at Mississippi State
Oct. 29 at Tennessee
Nov. 5 at Arkansas
Nov. 12 FLORIDA
Nov. 19 THE CITADEL
Nov. 26 CLEMSON

TENNESSEE
Sept. 3 MONTANA
Sept. 10 CINCINNATI
Sept. 17 at Florida
Oct. 1 BUFFALO
Oct. 8 GEORGIA
Oct. 15 LSU
Oct. 22 at Alabama
Oct. 29 SOUTH CAROLINA
Nov. 5 MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE
Nov. 12 at Arkansas
Nov. 19 VANDERBILT
Nov. 26 at Kentucky

VANDERBILT
Sept. 3 ELON
Sept. 10 CONNECTICUT
Sept. 17 OLE MISS
Sept. 24 at South Carolina
Oct. 8 at Alabama
Oct. 15 GEORGIA
Oct. 22 ARMY
Oct. 29 ARKANSAS
Nov. 5 at Florida
Nov. 12 KENTUCKY
Nov. 19 at Tennessee
Nov. 26 at Wake Forest

SUN BELT

ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 3 at Illinois
Sept. 10 MEMPHIS
Sept. 17 at Virginia Tech
Sept. 24 CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Oct. 1 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 8 at ULM
Oct. 18 FIU
Oct. 29 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 5 at Florida Atlantic
Nov. 12 LOUISIANA
Nov. 19 at Middle Tennesse State
Dec. 3 TROY

FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 3 at Florida
Sept. 10 at Michigan State
Sept. 24 at Auburn
Oct. 1 at Louisiana
Oct. 8 at North Texas
Oct. 15 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 22 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 5 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 12 at FIU
Nov. 19 at Troy
Nov. 26 UAB
Dec. 3 ULM

FIU
Sept. 1 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 9 at Louisville
Sept. 17 UCF
Sept. 24 LOUISIANA
Oct. 1 DUKE
Oct. 8 at Akron
Oct. 18 at Arkansas State
Oct. 25 TROY
Nov. 5 at Western Kentucky
Nov. 12 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 19 at ULM
Nov. 26 at Middle Tennessee

LOUISIANA
Sept. 3 at Oklahoma State
Sept. 10 at Kent State
Sept. 17 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 24 at FIU
Oct. 1 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 8 TROY
Oct. 15 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 22 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 29 at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 5 ULM
Nov. 12 at Arkansas State
Nov. 26 at Arizona

ULM
Sept. 3 at Florida State
Sept. 10 GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 17 at TCU
Sept. 24 at Iowa
Oct. 8 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 15 at Troy
Oct. 22 at North Texas
Oct. 29 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 5 at Louisiana
Nov. 12 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 19 FIU
Dec. 3 at Florida Atlantic

MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 3 at Purdue
Sept. 10 GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 24 at Troy
Oct. 1 MEMPHIS
Oct. 6 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 22 at Florida Atlantic
Oct. 29 LOUISIANA
Nov. 5 at Tennessee
Nov. 12 at ULM
Nov. 19 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 26 FIU
Dec. 3 at North Texas

NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 1 at FIU
Sept. 10 HOUSTON
Sept. 17 at Alabama
Sept. 24 INDIANA
Oct. 1 at Tulsa
Oct. 8 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 15 at Louisiana
Oct. 22 ULM
Oct. 29 at Arkansas State
Nov. 12 at Troy
Nov. 19 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Dec. 3 MIDDLE TENNESSEE

SOUTH ALABAMA
Sept. 1 WEST ALABAMA
Sept. 10 LAMAR
Sept. 17 at NC State
Sept. 24 at Kent State
Oct. 8 at Texas-San Antonio
Oct. 15 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Oct. 22 at Georgia State
Oct. 29 HENDERSON STATE (Ark.)
Nov. 3 MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
Nov. 19 CAL POLY

TROY
Sept. 3 at Clemson
Sept. 17 at Arkansas
Sept. 24 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 1 UAB
Oct. 8 at Louisiana
Oct. 15 ULM
Oct. 25 at FIU
Nov. 5 at Navy
Nov. 12 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 19 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 26 at Western Kentucky
Dec. 3 at Arkansas State

WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 1 vs. Kentucky (Nashville)
Sept. 10 NAVY
Sept. 17 INDIANA STATE
Oct. 1 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 6 at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 15 at Florida Atlantic
Oct. 22 LOUISIANA
Oct. 29 at ULM
Nov. 5 FIU
Nov. 12 at LSU
Nov. 19 at North Texas
Nov. 26 TROY

WAC

FRESNO STATE
Sept. 3 vs. California (San Francisco)
Sept. 10 at Nebraska
Sept. 17 NORTH DAKOTA
Sept. 24 at Idaho
Oct. 1 OLE MISS
Oct. 7 BOISE STATE
Oct. 15 UTAH STATE
Oct. 22 at Nevada
Nov. 5 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 12 at New Mexico State
Nov. 19 at Hawaii
Nov. 26 SAN JOSE STATE
Dec. 3 at San Diego State

HAWAII
Sept. 3 COLORADO
Sept. 10 at Washington
Sept. 17 at UNLV
Sept. 24 UC DAVIS
Oct. 1 at Louisiana Tech
Oct. 15 at San Jose State
Oct. 22 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 29 at Idaho
Nov. 5 UTAH STATE
Nov. 12 at Nevada
Nov. 19 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 26 TULANE
Dec. 3 BYU

IDAHO
Sept. 1 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 10 NORTH DAKOTA
Sept. 17 at Texas A&M
Sept. 24 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 1 at Virginia
Oct. 8 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 15 at New Mexico State
Oct. 29 HAWAII
Nov. 5 at San Jose State
Nov. 12 at BYU
Nov. 19 UTAH STATE
Dec. 3 at Nevada

LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 3 at Southern Miss
Sept. 10 CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Sept. 17 HOUSTON
Sept. 24 at Mississippi State
Oct. 1 HAWAII
Oct. 8 at Idaho
Oct. 22 at Utah State
Oct. 29 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 5 at Fresno State
Nov. 12 at Ole Miss
Nov. 19 at Nevada
Nov. 26 NEW MEXICO STATE

NEVADA
Sept. 10 at Oregon
Sept. 17 at San Jose State
Sept. 24 at Texas Tech
Oct. 1 at Boise State
Oct. 8 UNLV
Oct. 15 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 22 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 29 at New Mexico State
Nov. 12 HAWAII
Nov. 19 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 26 at Utah State
Dec. 3 IDAHO

NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 3 OHIO
Sept. 10 Minnesota
Sept. 17 UTEP
Sept. 24 at San Jose State
Oct. 1 at New Mexico
Oct. 15 IDAHO
Oct. 22 at Hawaii
Oct. 29 NEVADA
Nov. 5 at Georgia
Nov. 12 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 19 at BYU
Nov. 26 at Louisiana Tech
Dec. 3 UTAH STATE

SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 3 at Stanford
Sept. 10 at UCLA
Sept. 17 NEVADA
Sept. 24 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 1 at Colorado State
Oct. 8 at BYU
Oct. 15 HAWAII
Oct. 29 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 5 IDAHO
Nov. 12 at Utah State
Nov. 19 NAVY
Nov. 26 at Fresno State

UTAH STATE
Sept. 3 at Auburn
Sept. 10 WEBER STATE
Sept. 24 vs. Colorado State
Sept. 30 at BYU
Oct. 8 WYOMING
Oct. 15 at Fresno State
Oct. 22 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 5 at Hawaii
Nov. 12 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 19 at Idaho
Nov. 26 NEVADA
Dec. 3 at New Mexico State

KEEPING THE *faith*

BY BILL SORRELL

COUSINS THROWS THE BALL ... AND WALKS THE WALK

That he stood up for his convictions by not only talking the talk but walking the walk is the most important statement Kirk Cousins' teammates could make about him.

But before Cousins, Michigan State's quarterback, could walk, he had to crawl.

He and his teammates went on a weight lifting crawl to five weight rooms on Michigan State's campus.

The goal was to work so hard they were at the point of crawling between venues. They did pushups to "make sure we didn't lose our pump," and, as a joke, put on baby oil "to make us shine," said Cousins.

It wasn't the first time Cousins has shined.

After leading Michigan State to a share of the 2010 Big Ten title and completing 456 of 709 passes for 64 percent and a 146.7 passing efficiency rating as a two year starter,, both first in Spartans history, Cousins was named honorable mention All-Big Ten.

He was one of 16 semifinalists for the Davey O'Brien Award as the nation's top quarterback and one of 10 finalists for the Wuerffel Trophy. With a 3.6 GPA and major in kinesiology, Cousins was Academic All-Big Ten.

One of 22 players nationwide, Cousins was named to the Allstate AFCA (American Football Coaches Association) Good Works Team®.

Community involvement, commitment to working with a charitable organization or service group and good academic standing are considerations for the team.

"It was a great opportunity to be part of a team of people who have tried to make a difference with the platform college football has given them; people who look outside themselves and toward the needs of other people," said Cousins.

He volunteers in the pediatric unit of Sparrow Medical Center in Lansing and has worked with the Sparrow Children's Miracle Network Telethon. He has encouraged involvement in Mentor1 Sports, an organization that provides mentors for Grand Rapids-area children without a male family figure.

About 20 times a year, he speaks to churches, civic groups and football teams, proclaiming his testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

"I share my story of the difference that Jesus Christ has made in my life as a football player, as a student, as a son, as a brother and in every role. Jesus has made the biggest impact and I want that to be known. I want to live a life that makes God visible and puts Him on display. I want to glorify Him and make Him famous," said Cousins, who is also involved with the Athletes In Action ministry.

As he enters his fifth year at MSU with the fourth-most passing yards (5,815) in school history, Cousins said the decision to honor God "above all else" has made all the difference.

It was while walking in the footsteps of Jesus that Cousins cemented his commitment to make Christ his "foundation."

With 50 Holland (Mich.) Christian High School classmates in 2007, Cousins went to Israel for a two-week study in Jerusalem and around the Sea of Galilee.

"When you walk in the footsteps of Jesus, there is great excitement and intrigue. That motivated me to begin my days of college with a commitment of my faith above everything else in my life," he said.

Cousins did not have a Paul-like Damascus Road experience when he became a Christian. He was led to Christ at age 8 by his father Don Cousins, a national church consultant, author, and one of the founding staff members in 1975 of one of America's mega-churches, Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago.

As a high school junior, Cousins began to fully understand the scope of the gospel. He became more passionate about "following hard" after Jesus. He went from spiritual "mediocrity" to an "encompassing" relationship, he said.

"My faith means everything; more than throwing a touchdown pass to win a game, more than getting an 'A' in a class, more than landing a job. Jesus has been the sole molder of my character. The truth of the Bible has pierced my heart and opened my eyes."

Out of high school, Cousins was not in demand. A broken ankle made him miss most of his junior season. He claimed his life verse, Proverbs 3:5-6, for his future, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight."

Scholarship offers did come however — in the eleventh hour.

Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio has watched Cousins develop as a leader.

"Due to the nature of the position, all quarterbacks have to be leaders," Dantonio said. "There aren't many leaders like Kirk Cousins. What makes Kirk a special leader is that he's truly a giver. He focuses his attention on others. If someone needs to be lifted up, he's there for them. His teammates see his genuine concern for them. Kirk is a positive role model on the field, in the classroom and in the community."

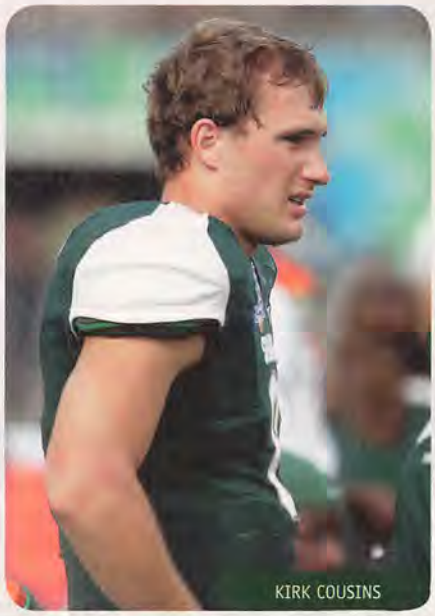
He was only the second sophomore in program history to be elected a team captain.

At MSU, Cousins, who has as many good memories of being in the high school swing choir as he does playing high school football, found a spiritual role model in Justin Kershaw, a former defensive lineman and captain.

"My spiritual mentors have done a great job of making Jesus cool. Too often we picture Jesus as pointing the finger at us. My mentors opened my eyes that Jesus is one cool dude," said Cousins.

Cousins points to Christ.

"I have been given an ability to throw a football and play college football at a high level," he said. "I realize it is not anything I have done, but by His grace and what He has done for me. I want to live a life that points back to Him."



KIRK COUSINS

Photo by Joe Robbins/Getty Images

NATIONAL RECRUITING

By Chris Nee
Rivals.com

1 Alabama

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 3, TE – 1, OL – 5, DE – 4, DT – 2, LB – 3, DB – 2, ATH – 1

THE BUZZ: Nick Saban and Alabama won another recruiting crown with a haul of 23 signees in 2011.

Leading the class is a trio of five-star prospects — offensive tackle **Cyrus Kouandjio**, running back **Demetrius Hart** and defensive back **Hasean Clinton-Dix**. All three prospects came from out-of-state. Alabama once again proved they are attractive across the nation by signing prospects from Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio and Tennessee.

The class was able to hold onto the top spot due to a strong finish. The commitments of in-state linebacker **Brent Calloway** and North Carolina defensive end **Jeoffrey Pagan** came on National Signing Day, while Kouandjio took until Feb. 5th to officially sign with Alabama, choosing the Crimson Tide over Auburn.

The defensive line at Alabama reloaded. In addition to Pagan, the Crimson Tide added defensive ends **D.J. Pettway**, **Xzavier Dickson**, and junior college defensive end **Quinton Dial**. At defensive tackle, they landed **LaMichael Fanning,** as well as another junior college prospect, **Jesse Williams**.

Offensively, Hart and Kouandjio were at the top of the class, but a trio of wide receivers will provide depth and talent at the position for Alabama. **Marvin Shinn** and **Danny Woodson** provide size, both checking in at taller than 6-2, while **Bradley Sylve** adds great speed. Sylve could contribute early on special teams.

2 Florida State

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 3, WR – 2, TE – 1, OL – 8, DE – 2, DT – 5, LB – 2, DB – 5

THE BUZZ: Florida State put together a phenomenal class by winning numerous major recruiting battles in the Sunshine State. In total, 23 of the 29 signees came from within Florida. Two of the best in-state prospects, five-star safety **Karlos Williams** and five-star running back **James Wilder Jr.**, both opted for the Garnet and Gold.

The Seminoles addressed their defensive line depth by adding top junior college defensive end **Cornellius Carradine** from Butler County C.C. in El Dorado, Kansas. Carradine, who was an early enrollee, has an excellent opportunity to compete for a starting job in 2011. At defensive tackle, the class was topped by **Timmy Jernigan**.

Another position that saw a major upgrade was tight end. The Seminoles landed the nation's top prospect at the position when they secured the services of **Nick O'Leary**. The 6-4, 235-pound tight end is a sound blocker and also an excellent receiver option.

Offensive line coach Rick Trickett was able to restock his position signing nine linemen. Junior college interior lineman **Jacob Fahrenkrug**, as well as high school prospects **Bobby Hart** and **Josue Matias** lead the group.

3 Texas

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 2, WR – 2, TE – 1, OL – 5, DE – 1, DT – 2, LB – 3, DB 4, ATH – 1

THE BUZZ: Mack Brown and the Longhorns will look to turn things around in 2011 by leaning on a talented incoming freshman class. One prospect with a shot to contribute starting with his first day on campus is five-star running back **Malcolm Brown**. Brown is a talented big back checking in at 6-0, 220-pounds.

Texas' class is largely from within the state. The only out-of-state signee was defensive back **Josh Turner**, who hails from Oklahoma City (Okla.) Millwood. He was considered the top prospect in the state of Oklahoma by Rivals.com.

As for the in-state haul, Brown is the top of the crop, but others such as linebacker **Steve Edmond**, wide receiver **Jaxon Shipley**, and defensive back **Quandre Diggs** were all considered top 10 Lone Star State prospects.

Quarterback **David Ash** was an early enrollee and competed in spring practice but isn't likely to immediately compete with Case McCoy, Garrett Gilbert or Connor Wood at this time.

4 Southern California

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, RB – 1, WR – 3, OL – 6, DE – 4, DT – 3, LB – 4, DB – 2, ATH – 3, K – 2

THE BUZZ: Despite troubles with the NCAA and questions hovering around the program, Lane Kiffin and staff locked up a total of 30 prospects in their 2011 class. The Trojans addressed depth with talent at nearly every position.

The top player in the class is an in-state wide receiver, **George Farmer**. Farmer who has great top-end speed, is electric with the ball in his hands. Fellow signees **Victor Blackwell** and **Junior Pomee** are also talented wideouts who opted to stay in their home state and play for the Trojans.

Another prospect who could play wide receiver, is athlete **Marqise Lee**, who was a teammate of Farmer's at Gardena (Calif.) Junipero Serra.

The Trojans earned headlines on National Signing Day by closing strong and that charge was led by a pair of out-of-state prospects. The Trojans beat the Buckeyes for Cleveland (Ohio) Glenville offensive tackle **Aundrey Walker**. They also dipped into SEC territory and staved off such schools as Tennessee and Kentucky for Danville (Ky.) Boyle County linebacker **Lamar Dawson**.

Outside of the Golden State, Kiffin and company signed prospects from Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey and Ohio.

5 Georgia

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 3, TE – 1, OL – 6, DE – 2, DT – 2, LB – 3, DB – 4, ATH – 3

THE BUZZ: Coming off a disappointing season, Mark Richt put together a great 2011 class by securing a number of top targets within the Peach State's borders. What became affectionately known as the Georgia "Dream Team" is a class that could help put Georgia back in the discussion for the SEC Championship.

The "Dream Team" was headlined by five-star running back **Isaiah Crowell** and five-star defensive end **Ray Drew**. Crowell is a great mix of speed and power and has an opportunity to contribute early. Drew has a great frame, good first step, and is a well developed defensive end.

Other members of the "Dream Team" included defensive back **Malcolm Mitchell**, defensive back **Damian Swan**, and tight end **Jay Rome**. In all, Georgia landed seven of the top ten prospects in the 2011 class from the Peach State.

Also at the top of the class for the Bulldogs was quarterback **Christian LeMay**, who signed out of Matthews (N.C.) Butler. LeMay, a 6-2, 200-pound signal-caller was considered one of the nation's top pro-style quarterbacks. LeMay excels due to a strong arm and great accuracy.

A pair of less heralded prospects to keep an eye on are at the linebacker position and both hail from the Sunshine State. **Ramik Wilson** and **Kent Turene** will both be pivotal pieces in Georgia's remodeled defense under Todd Grantham.

6 LSU

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 3, RB – 1, WR – 3, OL – 4, DE – 2, DT – 2, LB – 1, DB – 4, ATH – 2, K – 1

THE BUZZ: Les Miles class was headlined by the top three in-state prospects for Louisiana in 2011. Offensive tackle **La'El Collins**, defensive tackle **Anthony Johnson**, and wide receiver **Jarvis Landry** were all considered five-star players from Louisiana and all three opted to stay home and play for the Bayou Bengals. All three should see playing time early in Baton Rouge.

The state's remaining two prospects in the top five, wide receiver **Odell Beckham Jr.** and **Kenny Hilliard**, also opted to stay home for their college careers. Beckham Jr. will combine with Landry to form a very explosive pair of wide receivers who can break a game open every time they get their hands on the ball.

Out of 23 signees, 16 came from the Pelican State. Other signees came from Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi and Texas.

The top two defensive back signees in the class came from out-of-state with **David Jenkins**, from Texas, and **Jalen Collins**, from Mississippi.

Also, all three quarterbacks coming in with the 2011 class came from outside the state borders. **Zach Mettenberger**, the former Georgia quarterback, made his way to LSU via a stop at Butler County C.C. in Kansas. He will be joined by a pair of high school signees, **Stephen Rivers** from Alabama and **Jerrard Randall** from Florida.

7 Auburn

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 2, WR – 2, TE – 2, OL – 4, DE – 2, DT – 2, LB – 4, DB – 5

THE BUZZ: The Auburn Tigers followed up their national championship by bringing a top 10 class to campus. You have to look no further than the top of

the class to see the impact of a national championship. The top two signees for the Tigers both hail from out-of-state.

Linebacker **Kris Frost**, a five-star, is making his way to Auburn from Matthews (N.C.) Butler. Offensive tackle **Christian Westerman** decommitted from the Texas Longhorns and switched to Auburn late in the process. Westerman is from Chandler (Ariz.) Hamilton. In total, 14 of Auburn's signees were from out of state, with Florida and Georgia being the states that contributed the most.

The in-state haul for Gene Chizik was also very good. At the top of the class from Alabama is defensive back **Erique Florence**. He is joined by offensive lineman Reese Dismukes, who enrolled early.

At quarterback, Gus Malzahn opted for the top prospect in Arkansas, dual-threat quarterback **Kiehl Frazier**. Frazier is a tall, thick quarterback with a big arm and good athleticism.

The defensive back class for Auburn was top-notch. In addition to Florence, they also secured the services of fellow in-state defensive backs Jonathan **Rose** and **Anthony Swain**. They also went to Mississippi for **Jermaine Whitehead** and Florida for **Robenson Therezie**.

8 Clemson

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 3, RB – 1, WR – 4, TE – 1, OL – 4, DE – 3, DT – 4, LB – 5, DB – 2, ATH -1, K – 1

THE BUZZ: Dabo Swinney and the Clemson Tigers were the only team in 2011 to land four five-star signees. What makes that haul even more impressive is that a trio of them came from the talent-rich state of Florida with the fourth hailing from neighboring North Carolina.

The trio of five-star prospects from the Sunshine State was running back **Mike Bellamy**, wide receiver **Sammy Watkins**, and linebacker **Tony Steward**. Steward opted for the Tigers over in-state Florida State on National Signing Day. The North Carolina product is linebacker **Stephone Anthony**, who chose Clemson over Virginia Tech on National Signing Day. The additions of Steward and Anthony help to resolve a major void at the linebacker spot for the Tigers.

In total, Clemson signed five linebackers. Joining Steward and Anthony will be in-state signees **Lateek Townsend** and **B.J. Goodson**, as well as North Carolina product **Colton Walls**.

After spending a year at Hargrave Military Academy, defensive end **Corey Crawford** is set to arrive on campus. He has a chance to earn a spot in the rotation at defensive end early in his career.

Clemson addressed needs of depth and talent along their front seven by signing a total of 12 players at those positions.

Other positions where depth and talent were addressed was wide receiver, where Watkins is complimented by the likes of **Charone Peake** and **Martavis Bryant**, and quarterback where they brought in a trio – **Cole Stoudt**, **Morgan Roberts** and **Tony McNeal**.

9 Oregon

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 4, OL – 5, DE – 2, DT – 1, LB – 5, DB – 1, ATH – 3

THE BUZZ: The Ducks parlayed their national championship game appearance into a strong 2011 class. Chip Kelly and company scoured the nation looking for the best talent and finished with 23 signees, 20 of whom are from out of state.

The top of the class heading to Eugene includes one in-state signee, athlete **Colt Lyerla**, and a pair of prospects from California – athlete **De'Anthony Thomas** and wide receiver **Devon Blackmon**. Lyerla's future is likely on defense, while Thomas could play on either side of the ball. Blackmon is a burner at the wide receiver position who quickly stretches the field. He will be complimented by fellow wide receiver signee, **Tacoi Sumler**, from Florida, who is a prototypical slot wide receiver with great top-end speed.

Another talented athlete heading to Oregon is Iowa product **Christian French**. French has great size and speed and could play a variety of positions on either side of the ball.

Oregon addressed needs at the linebacker position by bringing in five. The group is led by Dallas (Texas) Skyline linebacker Anthony Wallace. Wallace has great size, 6-2, 220-pounds, and solid speed that makes him a threat all over the field.

Another spot where quality depth was added is along the offensive line. In total, five linemen signed with the Ducks. The top two linemen in the class both hail from Arizona, offensive tackles **Andre Yruretagoyena** and **Tyler Johnstone**.

10 Notre Dame

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 1, TE – 1, OL – 5, DE – 7, LB – 1, DB – 3, ATH – 2, K – 1

THE BUZZ: When talking about the signing class assembled by Notre Dame, the topic begins and ends with their incredible haul at defensive end. The top three signees in the class all line up at defensive end — five-stars **Ishaq Williams** and **Stephone Tuitt,** as well as four-star **Aaron Lynch**.

In addition to that trio, the Irish also landed **Tony Springmann**, **Anthony Rabasa**, **Ben Councell** and **Brad Carrico** at defensive end. In their defensive scheme, some of those signees will be utilized as outside linebackers by Brian Kelly and his staff.

Defensive end isn't the only position where the Irish added talent. Prospects such as wide receiver **Davaris Daniels**, tight end **Ben Koyack**, offensive linemen **Matthew Hegarty** and **Troy Niklas**, defensive back **Eilar Hardy**, and athlete **George Arkinson III** are also among the top prospects in the class.

At quarterback, the Irish were able to switch dual-threat signal-caller **Everett Golson** away from North Carolina late in the process. He cited the academic opportunities, combined with the spread offense at Notre Dame.

Also, Notre Dame continued to show their national allure by landing prospects from a total of 14 states, ranging coast-to-coast.

11 Ohio State

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, WR – 2, TE – 2, OL – 5, DE – 3, DT – 2, LB – 4, DB – 4

THE BUZZ: Jim Tressel and Ohio State landed another solid class in 2011. Leading the Buckeyes' haul is linebacker **Curtis Grant** from Richmond, Va. Grant is an explosive linebacker who is a tackling machine all over the field. The Buckeyes beat out the Florida Gators and others for his services.

Ohio State once again did well in their home state by signing seven of the top ten prospects available, including the top two in-state prospects, quarterback **Braxton Miller** and defensive tackle **Michael Bennett**. Miller is an electric athlete under center with a live arm. Another top in-state product, defensive back **Doran Grant**, also will play for the Buckeyes.

Miller isn't the only quarterback on his way to Columbus. Fellow local product **Cardale Jones** also signed with the Buckeyes.

The defensive end haul for the Buckeyes is one to be celebrated as well. Ohio products **Kenny Hayes**, **Steve Miller** and **Chase Farris** all opted to stay in-state. Hayes has the best opportunity to contribute early in his career.

12 Florida

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, RB – 2, WR – 2, TE – 1, OL – 2, DE – 2, LB – 1, DB – 6, K – 1

THE BUZZ: Will Muschamp and company did a good job sustaining the class they were handed upon the transition from Urban Meyer's resignation. Down the stretch, Muschamp and staff added quarterback **Jacoby Brissett**, defensive end **Tevin Westbrook**, linebacker **Graham Stewart**, and a pair of defensive backs in **Jabari Gorman** and **Marcus Roberson**. It helped to make up for a few defections and allowed the Gators to finish with a solid class.

Brissett, who didn't sign until after National Signing Day, will make his way on campus this summer. He will immediately be greeted by freshman Jeff Driskel, the Gator's top signee in 2011. Driskel is an incredible athlete with a strong arm and great speed. He is a true dual-threat quarterback who is now working to transition into the pro-style offense being utilized by Muschamp and staff.

Other offensive weapons making their way to Gainesville include versatile running back **Mike Blakely** and tight end **A.C. Leonard**, who is a thick athlete with good hands. At wide receiver, the Gators added speed in the slot with **Javares McRoy** and a big red-zone target on the outside in **Ja'Juan Story**.

Defensively, the class is led by Roberson, who decommitted from Auburn late in the process before ultimately opting for the Gators. Other talented defensive backs making their way to town include **Jabari Gorman** and **Louchiez Purifoy**. Purifoy could contribute early in his career as a return man.

13 Tennessee

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 3, WR – 1, TE – 1, OL – 6, DE – 1, DT – 3, LB – 3, DB – 5, ATH – 3

THE BUZZ: Derek Dooley and the Volunteers put together a solid class that may help move them back into contention among their SEC foes. The class

was led by wide receiver **DeAnthony Arnett** from Michigan. Joining him toward the top of the class were in-state offensive lineman **Antonio Richardson** and California junior college product **Byron Moore**, who is a defensive back.

The Volunteers addressed a need on the offensive line by signing six linemen. Joining Richardson are fellow linemen **Alan Posey**, **Kyler Kerbyson**, **Marcus Jackson**, **Mack Crowder** and **Cameron Clear**. Jackson enrolled early and has participated in spring ball.

Another spot where depth was added in Knoxville was in the defensive secondary. In addition to Moore, the Volunteers added **Justin Coleman**, **Pat Martin**, **Brian Randolph** and **Geraldo Orta**. Moore, Coleman and Martin all have a chance to contribute early in their careers.

The running back class heading to Tennessee is headlined by a pair of Sunshine State backs. **Marlin Lane** and **Tom Smith** are both big backs who can not only pound out tough yards, but also make big plays when they break loose. In-state prospect **Devrin Young** is more a change-of-pace back, as the small, 5-7, 156-pound back can make things happen in space.

At quarterback, the Volunteers invaded the Palmetto State to take **Justin Worley**. Worley racked up a number of accolades, including Gatorade National Football Player of Year honors.

14 Oklahoma

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 2, TE – 2, OL – 3, DE – 1, DT – 3, LB – 2, DB – 1, ATH – 1

THE BUZZ: Oklahoma signed a relatively small class bringing in just 17 prospects, but the Sooners got some great quality in 2011. The class is led by a pair of five-star prospects from Texas, wide receiver **Trey Metoyer** and running back **Brandon Williams**.

Metoyer and Williams are offensive weapons who could see early playing time. Metoyer is a tall wide receiver with great speed. Williams should help soften the blow caused by the loss of DeMarco Murray, as he is another big, powerful back with great speed.

Defensive tackle **Jordan Phillips** is another talented player heading to Norman. The long, lanky athlete has a great build and could contribute on either side of the ball. Phillips is part of a very talented haul at defensive tackle. He is joined by **Marquis Anderson** and **Jordan Wade**.

Geographically speaking, Texas treated Bob Stoops and company very well as 12 of their 17 signees hail from there. In comparison, just two in-state prospects opted for the Sooners, offensive lineman **Dylan Dismuke** and quarterback **Kendal Thompson**, who were ranked second and third in Oklahoma respectively.

15 Nebraska

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB -1, WR – 1, OL – 5, DE – 1, DT – 2, LB – 2, DB – 3, ATH – 2, K -1

THE BUZZ: The Cornhuskers put together a talented haul in 2011, led by **Tyler Moore**, an offensive lineman from Florida. Moore will help to open holes for running back **Aaron Green**, the younger brother of Husker Andrew Green.

Moore isn't the only quality lineman in the 2011 class for Bo Pelini and company. Joining Moore will be highly regarded linemen such as **Zach Sterup** and **Ryne Reeves**. **Ryan Klachko** and **Givens Mordi Price** help to round out a talented, deep haul along the offensive front.

Another talented offensive weapon in the class is quarterback **Jamal Turner** from Texas. Turner is a dual-threat quarterback who could play a variety of positions due to his high-level athleticism.

The class wasn't all about offense though. Defensively, prospects such as defensive tackle **Todd Peat Jr.**, linebacker **David Santos**, and defensive backs **Charles Jackson** and **Daimion Stafford** should provide important depth early.

Athletes **Bubba Starling** and **Ameer Abdullah** can play an array of positions and will find a home for the Huskers. With regards to Starling, the Major League Baseball draft could take him away from the Huskers before he ever makes an impact in Lincoln.

16 North Carolina

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 3, WR – 1, TE – 2, OL – 3, DE – 2, DT – 3, LB – 3, DB – 6, K – 1

THE BUZZ: Butch Davis and company pounded the pavement and turned over every rock to find talent far and wide for their 2011 class.

A position where it could be said that the Tar Heels hit a home run is on the offensive line. All three signees along the offensive front have a shot to make an impact early in their career. Offensive tackles **Kiaro Holts** and **Landon Turner** as well as offensive guard **Jarrod James**.

Another key offensive get for the Heels was in-state quarterback **Marquise Williams**. Williams, an early commitment to Carolina, flirted with Virginia Tech throughout the process largely due to concerns over the NCAA investigation surrounding North Carolina. Once those concerns were addressed, the talented dual-threat quarterback opted to sign with the in-state school.

On defense, in-state defensive linemen **Norkeithus Otis** and **Devonte Brown** combined with Virginia native, linebacker **Travis Hughes**, led the charge. Three under-the-radar defensive signees hail from the Sunshine State in linebacker **Keeon Virgile** and defensive backs **Samuel Smiley** and **Alex Dixon**.

While Butch Davis and company had to combat negative headlines and major question marks in assembling a class, it turned out to be a solid group.

17 California

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 4, WR – 1, TE – 1, OL – 2, DE – 3, DT – 2, LB – 2, DB – 4, ATH – 2

THE BUZZ: The Golden Bears assembled a solid class with a majority of the top talent coming from the Golden State. Some of the top in-state prospects they landed include running back **Brendon Bigelo**, offensive lineman **Jordan Rigsbee**, defensive end **Todd Barr**, defensive tackles **Viliama Moala** and **Mustafa Jalil**, linebacker **Jason Gibson**, and defensive back **Stefan McClure**.

Moala was the top-ranked prospect among that group, but Bigelow is the most intriguing. The dynamic running back hasn't played a meaningful down in over a year due to knee injuries. If he is able to fully recovery from the injuries that have sidelined him, Bigelow can do some special things.

Cal also went out of state for top talent. That crop was led by junior college offensive lineman **Matt Williams** from North Dakota, Oregon defensive end **Brennan Scarlett**, and Georgia defensive back **Avery Walls**. Scarlett was considered the No. 2 player in Oregon in 2011. Another state where they took a top talent was Massachusetts, where tight end **Richard Rodgers** is from.

18 South Carolina

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 3, WR – 3, OL – 6, DE – 2, DT – 4, LB – 5, DB – 4, ATH – 2

THE BUZZ: Steve Spurrier and South Carolina signed a massive class in 2011, which included the nation's consensus No. 1 player — in-state defensive end **Jadeveon Clowney**. Clowney is considered by pundits as an incredibly unique defensive end due to his great size, speed, athleticism and skill set. He will make an immediate, and major, impact for the Gamecocks barring injury.

Clowney wasn't the only talented defensive lineman signed by South Carolina. Joining him on the front four will be a pair of very talented defensive tackles, **Kelcy Quarles** and **Phillip Dukes**.

At defensive back, the class was led by **Sheldon Royster** and **Brison Williams**. **Ronnie Martin**, **Kadetrix Marcus**, and possibly athlete **Ahmad Christian** will add more depth at the position.

Offensively, the Gamecocks added quite a bit of talent on the offensive line. **Brandon Shell** is the top offensive lineman in the 2011 class in the state of South Carolina. He was considered the second best player in the Palmetto State behind Clowney. In addition to Shell, the Gamecocks signed five out-of-state offensive linemen — **Kaleb Broome**, **Kyle Harris** and **Quincy McKinney** from Georgia, as well as **Mike Matulis** and **Will Sport** from Florida.

At quarterback, the 'Cocks signed **Martay Mattox**. While he is expected to start his career under center, he could likely move to another position.

The wide receiver class includes **Shamier Jeffery**, the younger brother of Gamecock superstar wide receiver Alshon, as well as **Damiere Byrd**, arguably the fastest recruit in the 2011 class.

19 Ole Miss

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, WR – 5, TE – 1, OL – 4, DE – 1, DT – 3, LB – 4, DB – 5, ATH – 2

THE BUZZ: Houston Nutt and the Rebels put together a strong class led by a solid contingent from the Magnolia State. A total of 14 players from in-state signed with the Rebels.

At the top of that list is the No. 1 player in Mississippi in 2011, linebacker **C.J. Johnson**. Johnson is a wrecking ball on defense with great speed and an aggressive style. He is a quarterback on the defensive side of the ball.

Another top in-state player who opted to stay home and play for the Rebels

was electric wide receiver **Nickolas Brassell**. Joining Brassell at wide receiver from in-state is **Donte Moncrief** and **Tobias Singleton**. Those are the top three wideouts in the state of Mississippi for the 2011 class.

Offensive lineman **Aaron Morris** was also a top five in-state player who decided to play for the Rebels. Athlete **Cody Prewitt** is considered the top athlete from in-state and also signed with Ole Miss. In total, six of the state's top 10 players will be calling Oxford home starting this summer.

The Rebels also landed a pair of signal callers, **Maikhail Miller** from in-state and **Zack Stoudt** from the junior college ranks.

20 Texas Tech

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 3, WR – 4, TE – 1, OL – 4, DE – 6, DT – 1, LB – 3, DB – 2, ATH – 3

THE BUZZ: Texas Tech's class got a late addition with McKeesport, Pa., defensive tackle **Delvon Simmons**, a Rivals100 player, deciding to commit to the Red Raiders.

As for those that have signed, that group is led by in-state tight end **Jace Amaro**. The 6-5, 237-pound jumbo athlete is versatile with the capability to be a threat down the field or an asset blocking at the line.

The Red Raiders addressed needs by loading up at two spots, signing six defensive ends and four wide receivers.

The defensive end group is led by junior college transfer **Leon Mackey**, who is capable of coming in and contributing early in his career. **Branden Jackson**, a teammate of Simmons, and **Cooper Washington** are also excellent gets at defensive end.

At wide receiver, the class was led by junior college wideout **Marcus Kennard** as well as Texas product **Derek Edwards**.

Other top incoming players for Texas Tech will include running back **Kenny Williams**, a 200-plus pound running back with good speed, and offensive center **Tony Morales**.

Morales will be snapping the ball to dual-threat quarterback **Michael Brewer**, who was the lone quarterback signee in the 2011 class.

21 Michigan

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 1, OL – 2, DE – 4, LB – 4, DB – 4, ATH – 1, K – 1

THE BUZZ: Brady Hoke's first class at Michigan is led by an in-state running back **Justice Hayes**. Hayes, who was considered the No. 4 prospect in the State of Michigan in 2011, was the top signee for the Wolverines. Hayes is a very quick back with good speed and ball skills.

Tight end **Chris Barnett**, who is coming from Texas, is another major offensive weapon landed in the class. Barnett is a capable receiver at tight end with a thick frame that enables him to be an effective blocker. He decided on Michigan on National Signing Day.

Chris Bryant is an offensive tackle from Illinois who was the top offensive line signee in the class. He is an anchor who is tough to move off the block on the edge. He has a chance to contribute early in his career in Ann Arbor.

Defensively, the class was led by defensive end **Brennen Beyer**, an in-state product, and Maryland defensive back **Blake Countess**. Countess was considering the No. 3 player in the state of Maryland's 2011 class.

One other storyline surrounding the 2011 Michigan class was its success in Ohio. Michigan landed seven prospects from the neighboring state. The best of the bunch is linebacker **Antonio Poole**.

22 Stanford

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, RB – 2, WR – 2, OL – 2, DE – 3, DT – 2, LB – 2, DB – 3, ATH – 1

THE BUZZ: Stanford built up good momentum throughout the 2011 recruiting cycle, but that was halted somewhat with the departure of Jim Harbaugh from Palo Alto. During the final month of the process, the Cardinal landed just two prospects, a pair of defensive backs in **Wayne Lyons** and **Ronnie Harris**. Lyons pledged his services during the U.S. Army All-America Bowl.

The top of the class is linebacker **James Vaughters** from Georgia. The Peach State product possesses great size and speed and is a commanding force in the middle of the defense. He processes things quickly on the football field and does a great job of putting himself in position to make plays.

Another talented defender headed to Stanford is defensive end **Charlie Hopkins**. He is a long, strong defensive end who has good speed off the edge.

A pair of talented running backs are also heading to Stanford in **Remound Wright** and **Kelsey Young**. Both are powerfully built running backs with solid speed. Wright was considered the top prospect in the state of Indiana.

Stanford also snagged another top out-of-state player in offensive tackle **Brendon Austin**. Austin was considered the No. 1 prospect in the state of Colorado for 2011. Austin is a long-armed offensive tackle prospect with a great frame to add weight after getting on campus.

23 Washington

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 2, RB – 2, WR – 4, TE – 1, OL – 2, DE – 3, DT – 1, LB – 4, DB – 4

THE BUZZ: Steve Sarkisian and Washington did a great job staying west to assemble their class. Their 23 signees hail from just three states — 13 from California, nine from Washington, and one from Nevada.

In their home state, the Huskies signed five of the top six players. The top player from in-state is tight end **Austin Seferian-Jenkins**. Seferian-Jenkins was considered the nation's No. 2 tight end. He is a tall, big-bodied tight end who is very athletic.

A pair of other in-state offensive prospects have people feeling optimistic about the future of the Huskies. Wide receiver **Kasen Williams** is a physical wide receiver who is athletic and capable of going up to win jump balls. He is a target on the outside or across the middle. Running back **Bishop Sankey** is a quick running back who can rapidly change direction.

On defense, big-bodied defensive tackle **Danny Shelton** will provide a clog in the middle of the defensive line. He will provide good pressure through the middle of the line and demand double teams.

The best out-of-state signee for Washington was California's **James Sample**. Sample is a big safety with the ability to unload on wide receivers.

24 Arkansas

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 5, TE – 2, OL – 5, DE – 4, DT – 3, LB – 4, DB – 2, ATH – 3

THE BUZZ: Bobby Petrino and Arkansas assembled a top 25 class that is balanced with incoming talent on each side of the ball.

Two of the top offensive players coming in are from the Natural State. Offensive lineman **Brey Cook** and quarterback **Brandon Allen** were considered the second and third best players in-state, falling behind Auburn signee Kiehl Frazier. Cook is a huge offensive lineman who is versatile enough to play tackle or guard. Cook has already enrolled at Arkansas. Allen is a precision passer who makes great decisions with the ball in his hand and effectively moves an offense down the field.

In total, Arkansas signed seven of the top 10 in-state prospects in 2011.

The other two top signees for Arkansas in 2011 came from out-of-state, in New York wide receiver **Marquel Wade** and Texas defensive back **Tevin Mitchel**. Wade, who spent a year at prep school before enrolling at Arkansas in January, originally hails from Florida. He is a speedy wideout who can stretch the field. Mitchel is a talented cornerback with good size at 6-0, 175-pounds. He can combat size at the wide receiver position with his athletic ability.

In total, five of the Razorbacks commitments enrolled early. Joining Cook and Wade are defensive tackle **Robert Thomas**, linebacker **Tyler Gilbert**, and wide receiver **Quinta Funderbunk**.

25 Virginia

THE PARTICULARS: QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 1, OL – 4, DE – 5, DT – 2, LB – 3, DB – 5, ATH – 4

THE BUZZ: Mike London and Virginia claimed the final spot in the Top 25 by putting together a solid class largely built on in-state prospects.

Some of the top players in Virginia that decided to stay home to play for the Cavaliers include defensive back **Demetrious Nicholson**, athlete **Dominique Terrell**, running back **Clifton Richardson** and defensive tackle **David Dean**.

Nicholson is the top signee in the class. He is a 5-11, 167-pound cornerback who is physical at the line of scrimmage but has the hips and speed to turn and run with wide receivers down the field.

Out of state, Virginia landed two of the state of Maryland's top five players in athlete **Darius Jennings** and defensive back **Brandon Phelps**. Jennings, who was a high school quarterback, is expected to be utilized at slot receiver by Virginia. Phelps is a talented safety who has the opportunity to make an early impact in the secondary.

100 FOR 2011

INCOMING FRESHMEN

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Rk	Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School	College

QUARTERBACKS

32.	Jeff Driskel	6-3/225	Oviedo (FL) Hagerty	Florida
34.	Braxton Miller	6-2/185	Huber Heights (OH) Wayne	Ohio State
71.	Cody Kessler	6-1/208	Bakersfield (CA) Centennial	USC
72.	Brett Hundley	6-4/210	Chandler (AZ) Chandler	UCLA
75.	Jacoby Brissett	6-5/225	West Palm Beach (FL) Dwyer	Florida
76.	Max Wittek	6-4/215	Santa Ana (CA) Mater Dei	USC
86.	J.W. Walsh	6-2/190	Denton (TX) Guyer	Oklahoma State
88.	Christian LeMay	6-2/200	Matthews (NC) Butler	Georgia
89.	Kiehl Frazier	6-3/212	Springdale (AR) Shiloh Christian	Auburn

RUNNING BACKS

10.	Malcolm Brown	6-0/220	Cibolo (TX) Steele	Texas
11.	James Wilder Jr.	6-2/219	Tampa (FL) Plant	Florida State
14.	Brandon Williams	6-1/188	Brookshire (TX) Royal	Oklahoma
19.	Demetrius Hart	5-8/190	Orlando (FL) Dr. Phillips	Alabama
23.	Isaiah Crowell	5-11/210	Columbus (GA) Carver	Georgia
25.	Mike Bellamy	5-10/185	Punta Gorda (FL) Charlotte	Clemson
40.	Mike Blakely	5-9/194	Bradenton (FL) Manatee	Florida
58.	Savon Huggins	6-0/190	Jersey City (NJ) St. Peter's Prep	Rutgers
61.	Aaron Green	5-10/191	San Antonio (TX) James Madison	Nebraska
63.	Kenny Hilliard	6-0/218	Patterson (LA) Patterson	LSU
73.	Herschel Sims	5-10/190	Abilene (TX) Abilene	Oklahoma State
85.	Justice Hayes	5-10/175	Grand Blanc (MI) Grand Blanc	Michigan
93.	Amir Carlisle	5-10/181	Sunnyvale (CA) Kings Academy	USC

WIDE RECEIVERS

3.	George Farmer	6-2/192	Gardena (CA) Junipero Serra	USC
12.	Trey Metoyer	6-2/198	Whitehouse (TX) Whitehouse	Oklahoma
15.	Sammy Watkins	6-1/180	Fort Myers (FL) South Fort Myers	Clemson
18.	Jarvis Landry	5-11/178	Lutcher (LA) Lutcher	LSU
35.	Devon Blackmon	6-0/175	Fontana (CA) Summit	Oregon
43.	Odell Beckham Jr.	5-10/165	New Orleans (LA) Isidore Newman School	LSU
51.	Nickolas Brassell	6-0/175	Batesville (MS) South Panola	Ole Miss
60.	Kelvin Benjamin	6-6/210	Belle Glade (FL) Glades Central	Florida State
62.	Jaxon Shipley	6-0/170	Brownwood (TX) Brownwood	Texas
78.	Marvin Shinn	6-3/177	Prichard (AL) Vigor	Alabama
83.	Charone Peake	6-3/200	Roebuck (SC) Dorman	Clemson
84.	DeAnthony Arnett	6-0/167	Saginaw (MI) Saginaw	Tennessee
98.	Kasen Williams	6-2/197	Sammamish (WA) Skyline	Washington

TIGHT ENDS

33.	Nick O'Leary	6-4/235	West Palm Beach (FL) Dwyer	Florida State
39.	Austin Seferian-Jenkins	6-7/250	Gig Harbor (WA) Gig Harbor	Washington
52.	Jace Amaro	6-5/237	San Antonio (TX) Macarthur	Texas Tech
56.	Jay Rome	6-5/255	Valdosta (GA) Valdosta	Georgia
57.	A.C. Leonard	6-2/232	Jacksonville (FL) Univ. Christian School	Florida
59.	Eric MacLain	6-5/245	Fayetteville (NC) Jack Britt	Clemson
82.	Ben Koyack	6-5/230	Oil City (PA) Oil City Senior	Notre Dame

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

4.	Cyrus Kouandjio	6-6/322	Hyattsville (MD) DeMatha	Alabama
6.	La'El Collins	6-5/285	Baton Rouge (LA) Redemptorist	LSU
27.	Christian Westerman	6-5/288	Chandler (AZ) Hamilton	Auburn
64.	Aundrey Walker	6-5/355	Cleveland (OH) Glenville Academic Campus	USC
66.	Brandon Shell	6-7/290	Charleston (SC) Goose Creek	South Carolina
67.	Tyler Moore	6-6/295	Clearwater (FL) Countryside	Nebraska
70.	Matthew Hegarty	6-5/265	Aztec (NM) Aztec	Notre Dame
74.	Antonio Richardson	6-6/310	Nashville (TN) Pearl-Cohn	Tennessee
77.	Bobby Hart	6-4/283	Fort Lauderdale (FL) St. Thomas Aquinas	Florida State
79.	Reese Dismukes	6-4/287	Spanish Fort (AL) Spanish Fort	Auburn
90.	Greg Robinson	6-4/296	Thibodaux (LA) Thibodaux	Auburn

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1.	Jadeveon Clowney	6-6/247	Rock Hill (SC) South Pointe	South Carolina
9.	Ray Drew	6-5/243	Thomasville (GA) Thomas County Central	Georgia
16.	Ishaq Williams	6-6/230	Brooklyn (NY) Abraham Lincoln	Notre Dame
22.	Stephon Tuitt	6-5/260	Monroe (GA) Monroe Area	Notre Dame
28.	Aaron Lynch	6-6/245	Cape Coral (FL) Island Coast	Notre Dame
42.	Jeoffrey Pagan	6-4/272	Asheville (NC) Asheville	Alabama
44.	Anthony Chickillo	6-3/226	Tampa (FL) Alonso	Miami
46.	Greg Townsend Jr.	6-4/242	Beverly Hills (CA) Beverly Hills	USC
48.	Xzavier Dickson	6-3/238	Griffin (GA) Griffin	Alabama
65.	Anthony Zettel	6-4/254	West Branch (MI) Ogemaw Heights	Penn State
68.	Kenny Hayes	6-5/240	Toledo (OH) Whitmer	Ohio State
91.	Ben Councell	6-5/225	Asheville (NC) A. C. Reynolds	Notre Dame

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

17.	Anthony Johnson	6-4/298	New Orleans (LA) O. Perry Walker	LSU
29.	Timmy Jernigan	6-2/275	Lake City (FL) Columbia	Florida State
41.	Michael Bennett	6-3/275	Centerville (OH) Centerville	Ohio State
50.	Jordan Phillips	6-6/290	Towanda (KS) Circle	Oklahoma
80.	Delvon Simmons	6-5/265	McKeesport (PA) McKeesport	Texas Tech
94.	Christian Heyward	6-2/269	San Diego (CA) Point Loma	USC
95.	Desmond Jackson	6-1/278	Houston (TX) Westfield	Texas
99.	Viliami Moala	6-2/326	Sacramento (CA) Grant	California

LINEBACKERS

2.	Curtis Grant	6-3/222	Richmond (VA) Hermitage	Ohio State
13.	Tony Steward	6-2/225	St Augustine (FL) Pedro Menendez	Clemson
20.	Kris Frost	6-3/210	Matthews (NC) Butler	Auburn
21.	C.J. Johnson	6-3/235	Philadelphia (MS) Philadelphia	Ole Miss
24.	Stephone Anthony	6-3/220	Wadesboro (NC) Anson	Clemson
31.	Steve Edmond	6-3/245	Daingerfield (TX) Daingerfield	Texas
38.	Brent Calloway	6-1/210	Russellville (AL) Russellville	Alabama
45.	Lamar Dawson	6-2/230	Danville (KY) Boyle County	USC
54.	James Vaughters	6-2/233	Tucker (GA) Tucker	Stanford
55.	Lawrence Thomas	6-4/232	Detroit (MI) Renaissance	Michigan State
81.	Tre Madden	6-0/215	Mission Viejo (CA) Mission Viejo	USC
97.	Trey DePriest	6-2/231	Springfield (OH) Springfield	Alabama

DEFENSIVE BACKS

7.	Hasean Clinton-Dix	6-2/190	Orlando (FL) Dr. Phillips	Alabama
8.	Karlos Williams	6-2/210	Davenport (FL) Ridge	Florida State
30.	Malcolm Mitchell	6-1/187	Valdosta (GA) Valdosta	Georgia
37.	Marcus Roberson	6-1/170	Ft. Lauderdale (FL) St. Thomas Aquinas	Florida
47.	Damian Swann	6-0/175	Atlanta (GA) Grady	Georgia
49.	Quandre Diggs	5-10/188	Angleton (TX) Angleton	Texas
69.	Erique Florence	6-2/181	Valley (AL) Valley	Auburn
92.	Demetrious Nicholson	5-11/167	Virginia Beach (VA) Bayside	Virginia
96.	Gerod Holliman	6-0/180	Miami (FL) Southridge	Louisville
100.	Charles Jackson	5-11/180	Klein (TX) Klein Collins	Nebraska

ATHLETES

5.	De'Anthony Thomas	5-9/160	Los Angeles (CA) Crenshaw	Oregon
26.	Colt Lyerla	6-5/225	Hillsboro (OR) Hillsboro	Oregon
36.	Marqise Lee	6-1/187	Gardena (CA) Junipero Serra	USC
53.	LaDarius Brown	6-2/190	Waxahachie (TX) Waxahachie	TCU
87.	Christian French	6-6/229	Cedar Rapids (IA) Kennedy	Oregon

100 FOR 2012

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School

QUARTERBACKS

Anthony Alford	6-1/205	Petal, Mississippi/Petal
Jameis Winston	6-4/200	Hueytown, Alabama/Hueytown
Gunner Kiel	6-4/220	Columbus, Indiana/East
Zach Kline	6-2/192	Danville, California/San Ramon Valley
Zeke Pike	6-5/220	Edgewood, Kentucky/Dixie Heights

RUNNING BACKS

Brian Kimbrow	5-9/165	Memphis, Tennessee/Memphis East
Keith Marshall	5-11/190	Raleigh, North Carolina/Millbrook
Barry Sanders	5-11/190	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma/Heritage Hall
Bri'onte Dunn	6-2/215	Canton, Ohio/Glenoak
Byron Marshall	5-10/195	San Jose, California/Valley Christian
Johnathan Gray	5-11/190	Aledo, Texas/Aledo
Mario Pender	6-0/185	Cape Coral, Florida/Island Coast
Randy Johnson	5-9/170	Miami, Florida/Norland
Rushel Shell	6-0/210	Aliquippa, Pennsylvania/Hopewell
T.J. Yeldon	6-2/205	Daphne, Alabama/Daphne
Trey Williams	5-8/175	Spring, Texas/Dekaney

WIDE RECEIVERS

Avery Johnson	6-2/180	Pompano Beach, Florida/Blanche Ely
Bryce Treggs	5-10/157	Bellflower, California/St. John Bosco
Cayleb Jones	6-3/198	Austin, Texas/Austin
Chris Black	5-11/160	Jacksonville, Florida/First Coast
Davonte Neal	5-10/175	Scottsdale, Arizona/Chaparral
Deontay Greenberry	6-3/187	Fresno, California/Washington Union
Dorial Green-Beckham	6-6/220	Springfield, Missouri/Hillcrest
Durron Neal	6-1/184	St. Louis, Missouri/DeSmet
Jordan Payton	6-2/199	Westlake Village, California/Oaks Christian
Leonte Carroo	6-1/205	Ramsey, New Jersey/Don Bosco Prep
Stefon Diggs	6-1/189	Olney, Maryland/Our Lady Of Good Counsel
Thomas Johnson	6-0/180	Dallas, Texas/Skyline

TIGHT ENDS

Ricky Parks	6-3/210	Hogansville, Georgia/Callaway

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Evan Boehm	6-3/290	Lee's Summit, Missouri/Lee's Summit West
Andrus Peat	6-7/280	Tempe, Arizona/Corona Del Sol
Avery Young	6-6/273	Palm Beach Gardens, Florida/Palm Beach Gardens
Chris Muller	6-6/287	Boyertown, Pennsylvania/Boyertown Area Senior
D.J. Humphries	6-5/265	Charlotte, North Carolina/Mallard Creek
Erik Magnuson	6-6/275	Carlsbad, California/La Costa Canyon
Jessamen Dunker	6-6/215	Boynton Beach, Florida/Boynton Beach
John Michael McGee	6-4/255	Texarkana, Texas/Texas
John Theus	6-6/292	Jacksonville, Florida/Bolles
Jordan Simmons	6-5/333	Encino, California/Crespi
Josh Garnett	6-5/275	Puyallup, Washington/Puyallup
Kennedy Estelle	6-7/292	Pearland, Texas/Dawson
Kyle Kalis	6-5/302	Lakewood, Ohio/St. Edward
Kyle Murphy	6-7/275	San Clemente, California/San Clemente
Zach Banner	6-9/310	Lakewood, Washington/Lakes

DEFENSIVE ENDS

Alex Balducci	6-4/262	Portland, Oregon/Central Catholic
Channing Ward	6-4/230	Aberdeen, Mississippi/Aberdeen
Darius Hamilton	6-4/245	Ramsey, New Jersey/Don Bosco Prep
Greg McMullen	6-5/255	Akron, Ohio/Hoban
Javonte Magee	6-5/262	San Antonio, Texas/Sam Houston
Adolphus Washington	6-4/230	Cincinnati, Ohio/Taft
Dante Fowler Jr	6-3/232	St. Petersburg, Florida/Lakewood
Eli Harold	6-4/215	Virginia Beach, Virginia/Ocean Lakes
Ifeadi Odenigbo	6-4/210	Centerville, Ohio/Centerville
Jordan Jenkins	6-3/245	Hamilton, Georgia/Harris County
Mario Edwards	6-4/275	Denton, Texas/Ryan
Noah Spence	6-4/245	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania/Bishop McDevitt
Torshiro Davis	6-3/222	Shreveport, Louisiana/Woodlawn
Tyriq McCord	6-3/222	Tampa, Florida/Jefferson

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

Arik Armstead	6-8/280	Elk Grove, California/Pleasant Grove
Carlos Watkins	6-4/275	Forest City, North Carolina/Chase
Danny O'Brien	6-3/278	Flint, Michigan/Powers Catholic
Eddie Goldman	6-4/307	Washington DC/Friendship Collegiate Academy
Ellis McCarthy	6-5/311	Monrovia, California/Monrovia
Jarron Jones	6-5/305	Rochester, New York/Aquinas Institute
Jonathan Bullard	6-4/255	Shelby, North Carolina/Crest
Jonathan Taylor	6-4/315	Millen, Georgia/Jenkins County
Malcom Brown	6-2/280	Brenham, Texas/Brenham
Tommy Schutt	6-2/301	Glen Ellyn, Illinois/Glenbard West

LINEBACKERS

Quanzell Lambert	6-2/230	Sicklerville, New Jersey/Timber Creek
Brian Nance	6-3/210	Euless, Texas/Trinity
Jabari Ruffin	6-4/230	Downey, California/Downey
Kwon Alexander	6-2/212	Oxford, Alabama/Oxford
Noor Davis	6-4/215	The Villages, Florida/The Villages
Timothy Cole	6-2/220	Brenham, Texas/Brenham
Vince Biegel	6-3/210	Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin/Lincoln

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Geno Smith	6-0/175	Atlanta, Georgia/St Pius X School
Kevon Seymour	6-0/170	Pasadena, California/Muir
Tee Shepard	6-1/175	Fresno, California/Central East
Tracy Howard	6-0/170	Miramar, Florida/Miramar
Alex Carter	6-1/185	Ashburn, Virginia/Briar Woods
Elijah Shumate	6-1/205	Ramsey, New Jersey/Don Bosco Prep
Landon Collins	5-11/199	Geismar, Louisiana/Dutchtown
Shaq Thompson	6-2/210	Sacramento, California/Grant
Shaq Roland	6-1/170	Lexington, South Carolina/Lexington

ATHLETES

Alex Ross	6-1/205	Jenks, Oklahoma/Jenks
Chris Casher	6-4/225	Mobile, Alabama/Faith Academy
Cedric Dozier	5-11/175	Lakewood, Washington/Lakes
D.J. Foster	5-10/180	Scottsdale, Arizona/Saguaro
Darion Monroe	5-11/175	Reserve, Louisiana/East St. John
Deontay McManus	6-2/210	Baltimore, Maryland/Dunbar
Devin Fuller	6-0/185	Old Tappan, New Jersey/Old Tappan
Dominique Wheeler	6-1/176	Crockett, Texas/Crockett
Eddie Williams	6-4/197	Panama City, Florida/Arnold
Joel Caleb	6-3/200	Midlothian, Virginia/Clover Hill
Josh Harvey-Clemons	6-5/200	Valdosta, Georgia/Lowndes
Kendall Sanders	6-1/175	Athens, Texas/Athens
Nelson Agholor	6-2/180	Tampa, Florida/Berkeley Prep
Ronald Darby	5-11/172	Oxon Hill, Maryland/Potomac
Travis Blanks	6-1/195	Tallahassee, Florida/North Florida Christian
Zac Brooks	6-2/180	Jonesboro, Arkansas/Jonesboro Senior

TOP 10 SCHOOLS BY POSITION

Quarterback

1. Florida
2. USC
3. Ohio State
4. UCLA
5. Clemson
6. LSU
7. Arizona State
8. Auburn
8. Georgia
8. Oklahoma State

Running back

1. Florida State
2. Texas
3. Cal
4. Utah
5. Auburn
6. Alabama
7. Florida
8. Oklahoma
9. Clemson
9. Georgia

Wide Receiver

1. Clemson
1. USC
3. Oregon
4. Mississippi
5. LSU
6. Oklahoma
7. Alabama
8. Texas Tech
9. Florida State
10. Arkansas

Tight End

1. South Carolina
2. Auburn
2. Ohio State
4. Iowa
4. Wisconsin
6. Florida State
7. Washington
8. Florida
8. Georgia
8. Texas Tech

Offensive Line

1. Florida State
2. Nebraska
3. Alabama
4. USC
5. Auburn
6. LSU
7. Tennessee
8. Texas
9. South Carolina
10. North Carolina

Defensive Tackle

1. Florida State
2. Oklahoma
3. North Carolina
4. LSU
5. South Carolina
6. Rutgers
7. USC
8. Ohio State
9. Alabama
9. Georgia

Defensive End

1. Notre Dame
2. Alabama
3. Miami
4. Penn State
5. Georgia
6. Texas Tech
7. Ohio State
8. USC
9. South Carolina
10. Virginia Tech

Linebacker

1. Clemson
2. Ohio State
3. USC
4. Ole Miss
5. Texas
6. Michigan State
7. Auburn
8. Alabama
9. Oregon
10. Georgia

Defensive Back

1. Florida
2. Auburn
3. Florida State
4. Georgia
5. Texas
6. Louisville
7. Tennessee
8. Alabama
9. Virginia
10. Virginia Tech

Athlete

1. Oregon
2. TCU
3. USC
4. Virginia
5. Georgia
6. Georgia Tech
7. Tennessee
8. Nebraska
9. Iowa
10. Texas Tech

Kicker

1. USC
2. Texas A&M
3. Florida
4. Miami
5. Kansas
6. Arizona
6. North Carolina State
6. Louisiana-Monroe
6. UAB
10. Oklahoma State

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CRIMSON TIDE TRADITION ALIVE AND WELL

BY BEN COOK

Photo by Kent Gidley

Greg McElroy

There are few places in college football where traditions are held in as high esteem as at the University of Alabama.

From its glorious journeys to the Rose Bowl back in the Roaring '20s right on through the unveiling of the Nick Saban statue on the "Walk of Champions" outside Bryant-Denny Stadium this past A-Day, few teams can boast of such a glorious past as the Crimson Tide.

"No one can help but be aware of the rich tradition that is associated with this team and this University," said former Alabama President David Mathews.

"Tradition is a burden in many ways. To have a tradition like ours means that you can't lose your cool; to have tradition like ours means you always have to show class, even when you are not quite up to it; to have tradition like ours means that you have to do some things that you don't want to do and some you even think you can't do, simply because tradition demands it of you. On the other hand, tradition is that which allows us to prevail in ways that we could not otherwise."

Sure, other schools have traditions that are close to its heart, but few can match Alabama when it comes to keeping its past alive. Every day — especially a game day — in Tuscaloosa is a celebration of that history.

Visitors to the Alabama campus can celebrate the Crimson Tide history in any number of ways. A visit to the Bryant Museum is a nice place to start. Named for legendary coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, the museum sits on Paul Bryant Drive just a couple of blocks from Bryant-Denny Stadium. Inside is a magnificent journey back through time with exhibits and photographs of the Crimson Tide that chronicle Alabama's rise as a national football power.

One of the most popular exhibits, one that is always visited by former players, is the replica of the office of the museum's namesake — Paul Bryant. Former players, administrative staff and members of the media can't visit the exhibit without recalling numerous times they sat in Bryant's office with the coach himself. It was always a humbling and — often — a scary time.

The Bryant Museum came about when Bryant urged a museum to honor the former Alabama players, many of who helped him become — at that time — the winningest college football coach in history. The museum was opened on Oct. 8, 1988 and was named for the famous coach who passed away in 1983.

Nearby, the Mal Moore Athletic Building is home to the numerous trophies that Alabama teams have won, including national and SEC championship trophies and bowl trophies from almost every major bowl game.

Then a stroll over to the Quad brings you face to face with another Alabama tradition — the handprints and footprints of past football captains that are enshrined in the cement that surrounds Denny Chimes, another campus landmark. The placing of the captains' hand and foot prints takes place at the A-Day Game each spring. The tradition started during the spring of 1948 when the captains of the 1947 football team — halfback Harry Gilmer and offensive guard John Wozniak — were so honored. It continued this past spring with quarterback Greg McElroy, linebacker Dont'a Hightower and safety Mark Barron being enshrined.

Then, as kickoff nears, visitors head to Bryant-Denny Stadium where capacity is listed as 101,821, which makes it the fifth largest venue in college football and

Photo by R.D. Moore

Photo by Kent Gidley

Walk of Champions

the second largest in the Southeastern Conference. Outside the stadium, fans can visit the Walk of Champions where five coaches who have led Alabama teams to national championships are commemorated with statues — Wallace Wade, Frank Thomas, Paul Bryant, Gene Stallings and Nick Saban.

Saban's statue was unveiled at this past A-Day Game.

"That statue represents a lot of people," said Saban. It represents all the people on the team. I definitely wanted everyone's name that was on the team and contributed to that — whether it's players, coaches or administration, our fans and everyone who contributed to that — to be a part of it,".

"It's an honor, but it's also something that is just representative of a lot of people in terms of what they've done. I think all those other statues out there set the standard for what we want to try to accomplish here. It feels good to have accomplished that, but certainly it's something we want to work towards individually in the future, that everybody works to be the best they can be and play to a high standard, team wise, and also how we rank nationally with everybody else and in terms of how we compete together as a team.

"I am proud of what the 2009 team accomplished. It was good to see all those guys come back and be a part of that and also the families of all the other coaches who had good fortune here to win a national championship and contribute to the tradition we have at The University of Alabama," Saban concluded.

There are also two bronze statues of Alabama football players at the entrance to the North end zone. The two statues are holding a large Alabama flag. The player on the left is wearing the number 18, and the player on the right is wearing the number 92. These statues represent the entire Alabama football program, which began in 1892.

Once inside the stadium, there are numerous reminders of the glorious past history of Alabama football with videos displayed on the stadium's giant video screens.

But once the game is kicked off, all of the traditions are put back in the memory bank and the heart and soul of Alabama football takes centerstage.

Alabama football is made up of excellence, pride and dedication. One of the longest lasting aspects of Alabama football has been hard-hitting defense. Bryant always taught that defense wins football games and continually put his best players on the defensive side of the ball first. All-SEC quarterbacks Pat Trammell, Joe Namath, Steve Sloan and Kenny "Snake" Stabler all played defense before becoming offensive stars.

The tradition should continue in 2011, especially in the secondary. Alabama returns a secondary made up of four

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starters, including players who led the SEC in interceptions the past two seasons.

Free safety Mark Barron led the SEC in interceptions in 2009 with seven picks and strong safety Robert Lester's eight interceptions led the league last season. The cornerbacks are also returning staters — Dre Kirkpatrick and Dee Milliner. The quartet started together nine times last season. Kirkpatrick missed one start; Barron missed one start; and Milliner did not start two of the first three games, but was on the field as a starter the rest of the season.

But even with all that experience on the field at the A-Day Game, Saban still had coaching concerns.

"We were really limited with what we did defensively and offensively," he said following the game. "I think one of the strengths of our defensive team is the multiples of things we can do: the way we pressure, the way we create negative plays, all of that. That's been something that's been really good for us this spring that we made a lot of mental errors on last year as we tried to learn and grow. I felt like the coverage was pretty decent for the most part. I didn't see a lot of mental errors out there, just a few. The real test comes when we do more things because we will end up playing more middle-of-the-field coverage to get pressure and it will put more pressure on the coverage people.

"I was pleased because DeQuan Menzie had a good spring. Dre Kirkpatrick has made a lot of improvement. DeMarcus Milliner has made a lot of improvement. John Fulton has made a lot of improvement. We like the way Jarrick Williams has progressed as a safety. He will probably be a guy that will make a significant contribution. He didn't play on the first dime today because we wanted him to play more plays, but he probably would be on the first dime if we had a game tomorrow."

One of the stars of the game was Barron, who was still wearing a no-contact black jersey as he continued to rehab from a torn pectoral muscle he suffered in the Auburn game. He made the biggest defensive play of the spring game when he picked up a fumble and returned it 96 yards for a touchdown with an escort of three defensive teammates.

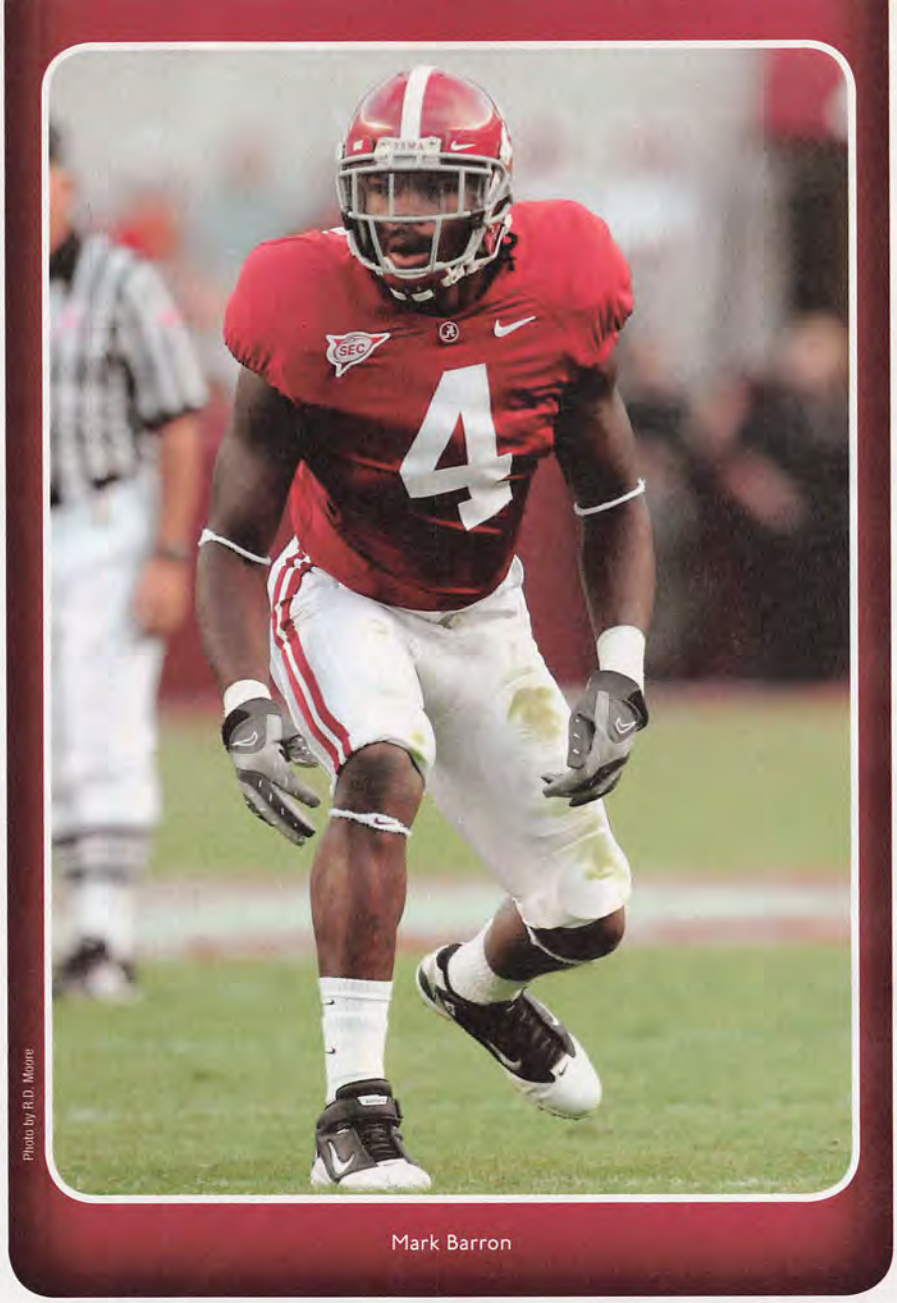

Photo by R.D. Moore

Mark Barron

"Mark Barron was limited, but his mobility was not limited, so he got all the reps and mental practice," said Saban. "Nick Perry has made some progress. It's a relatively young group. We replaced nine guys a year ago, and I think all those guys have improved to where it should affect their performance in a positive way."

The concerns Saban had defensively going into 2011 was more about the defensive front than the linebackers or secondary.

"I think the two areas of the team that personnel-wise we have the most questions about is receiver and defensive line. I think we made progress at wideout, but I still think there's room for improvement and consistency in what we are doing," Saban said.

"I think we also made a tremendous amount of progress with the defensive line. Damion Square had a good spring. Ed Stinson has gotten better. The junior college guys have made a significant amount of improvement, learning the system and getting more comfortable

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trying to play things the way we want to play them here.

"I think it's going to be important because we are going to have a different type of defense next year," the Tide coach said. "Linebackers are going to have to be playmakers for us and people in the secondary will have to do the same. That's where we are going to have the experience with those types of players. We've had some pretty dominant front guys around here the past few years. Even though we will have some good players, we may not have those kinds of players up front."

One of those players Saban will be looking for to step up is linebacker Courtney Upshaw.

"We go out and work each day," said Upshaw. "Our ultimate goal is to get to the quarterback. Even the two defense did a good job in the second half (of the A-Day Game) getting three or four sacks. All we talk about is getting to the quarterback, so that is what we try to do."

When it was over, Saban seemed pleased with the progress made all over the field.

"All in all, I thought that we had a really good spring, but the key to this team is: what's the commitment to the standard of excellence that they need to work toward, to commit to, to play to, to believe in, to have faith, trust and confidence in, so that we can be the best team that we can be? I think if we can be the best team we can be, we can have a really good football team," Saban said.

"Those are all questions that you have to prepare yourself to answer every day. You can't do it the Saturday of the first game; you have to do it every day between now and then. I've been pleased with the way this team has worked this offseason and this spring. We're pleased with the progress, but we obviously have a ways to go in some areas, and a lot of things to work on, and we are looking forward to doing that over the course of the summer and into fall camp."

One of the big keys to the defense will be the play of Hightower, who was never really 100 percent last season after a 2009 injury but is back to playing the way he wants to play.

"I feel a lot better," he said. "I just feel like my old self. I'm back in shape and my weight is down, and I'm playing a lot faster. It feels great after all the hard work I put in."

One of the players who stood out in the spring game was Menzie, a 6-0, 198-pound defensive back, who had an interception and six tackles. Trying to break into the starting lineup will be difficult for the senior from Columbus, Ga., but Saban and defensive coordinator Kirby Smart know they can count on him for valuable minutes in relief of the starters.

"We got the new guys in early so we can have better chemistry," Menzie said following his spring game performance. "I have a year under my belt and played with a lot of injuries, but I put everything behind me and am moving forward."

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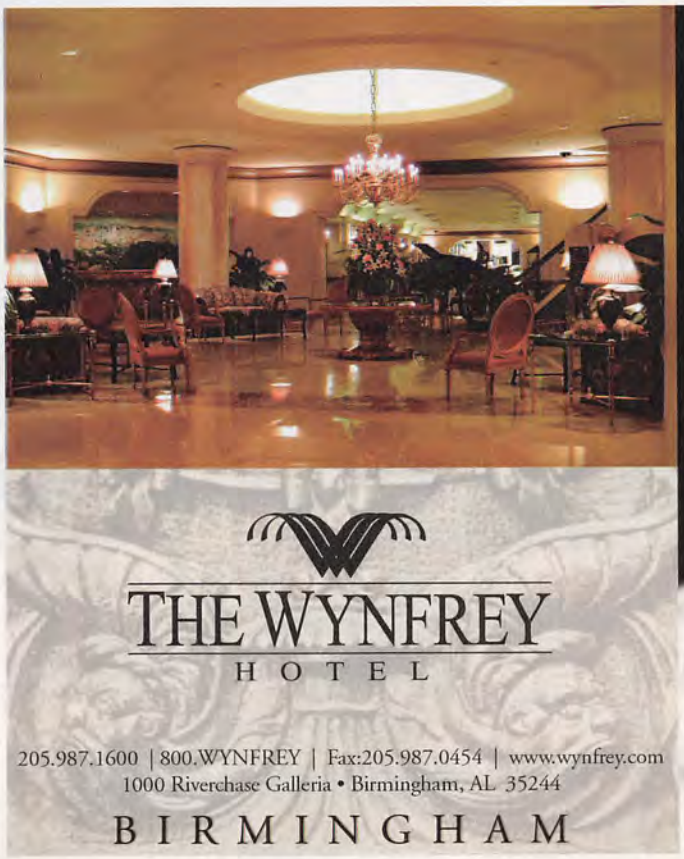

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THE TENANT'S ADVANTAGE

OFFENSIVE LINE PLANS TO BUILD ON THE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY LYN SCARBROUGH

There they were, thousands of joyous, boisterous Auburn fans, dancing and laughing, hugging and jumping up and down. The cavernous interior of University of Phoenix Stadium had erupted into a giant Auburn victory celebration as Wes Byrum's winning field goal sailed through the uprights, giving the Tigers the 2010 BCS national championship.

Auburn faithful made up more than two-thirds of the crowd as the game was played. Now, the yellow and green had emptied into the parking lot, leaving a vibrating sea of burnt orange and navy blue inside.

The band still played. The crowd still burst into spontaneous cheers. Confetti still fluttered in the air.

Beneath the stands, Auburn players and coaches and athletic staff were starting to realize what they had accomplished. It was an unforgettable scene.

"After the championship game, it was unbelievable in the dressing room," said offensive line coach Jeff Grimes. "Everybody was hugging and cheering and taking pictures. Everybody was just so excited."

It was in that setting that the Tigers' third-year coach realized the significance of the moment, especially to his linemen.

"In the middle of all of that, I looked over in the corner of the dressing room and there were Ryan Pugh and Lee (Ziemba) sitting on the bench," he recalled. "Their lockers were beside each other. They had their heads down in their hands. There were those two giant young men, two of the best linemen in the country, sobbing like children. Their careers had come to an end and it had ended this way.

"I went over to them and hugged them and we celebrated together. At that moment, I realized how much Auburn University meant to those two kids, as it does to so many others."

Looking back on the magical 2010 season for Auburn, it's not hard to realize just how much those offensive linemen meant to the team's success.

The statistics spoke for themselves.

Quarterback Cam Newton had 1,409 rushing yards, leading the conference and surpassing the all-time SEC single-season mark by a signal-caller, which had been set by Auburn's Jimmy Sidle 47 years before.

Freshman tailback Michael Dyer, the offensive hero of the BCS Championship Game, ran for over 1,000 yards and broke Bo Jackson's all-time Auburn freshman mark.

Through 13 games, the Auburn offense led the nation in passing efficiency, was sixth nationally in scoring offense and rushing offense, seventh in total offense, and tenth in first downs in the regular season.

Someone questioned how many games Auburn would have won without Cam Newton. Perhaps a better question would have been, how many games would the Tigers have won without that offensive line?

"It's highly unlikely that we win all of those games last season without a great group of guys up front," Grimes said. "Of course, we had great skilled players, but without the heavy lifting, the other things don't happen. As good as Cam was last season, he benefitted from those guys in front of him.

"That difference for the offensive line was especially true against SEC defensive lines. We came a long way last year. Our offensive linemen came into their own."

When Auburn takes the field against Utah State in the season opener, they will be defending national champions and holder of the country's longest winning streak (15 games). That's great ammunition for the fans, but won't mean anything after the opening kickoff.

"Of course, we certainly hope that there is some carryover from the championship season," Grimes said.

The Tigers lost a lot of experience from the line. Ziemba, a first-team Walter Camp All-American tackle and Jacobs Blocking Trophy winner, finished his four-year career, as did Pugh, a first-team All-SEC pick, third-team All-American and Rimington

Photo by Todd Van Emst

"Everybody says Auburn lost all of its good linemen. We're out to prove people wrong."
– Offensive tackle, Brandon Mosley

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Photo by Todd Van Ernst

Offensive Line Coach Jeff Grimes

Photo by Todd Van Ernst

Offensive Lineman Jared Cooper

Award Finalist as the nation's best center. The BCS Championship was also the final game for four other Auburn senior offensive linemen — Mike Berry, Byron Isom, Bart Eddins and Jorrell Bostrom.

Those are a lot of big shoes to be filled, not only on game day.

"This was strong cohesive group off the field as well as on the field," Grimes said. "They spent a lot of time together. We had four starters that had been together a long time. That's so important at these positions. We have to communicate better during the games than any other group on the field."

The cupboard won't be bare for Grimes. While the team lost a large number of seniors, as well as three players who left early for the NFL Draft, valuable experience was gained throughout the season by the backups at almost every position, including the line.

Tackles A.J. Greene and Brandon Mosley will be two guys most counted on to maintain offensive line continuity in 2011. Ironically, Greene's misfortune last season benefitted Mosley the most. Greene suffered a season-ending injury in the second half of the win over Clemson. Mosley was called on to take his place.

"Of course, when A.J. went down, we all hated to see it," Mosley said. "But, I was excited about the opportunity that it gave me to be part of the line. From the team's standpoint now, maybe it was a blessing in disguise. I got playing experience and A.J. has another year, so we're not as inexperienced as we might have been."

The Clemson game wasn't the first time Mosley was called on to fill in at tackle.

That happened the week before in the Tigers' win over Mississippi State in Starkville. Ziemba went down with an injury and Auburn coaches called Mosley's number. Problem was, that number at the time was 84.

"When Lee got hurt, I was on the sideline wearing No. 84," Mosley recalled. "I had been in some at tight end in the Wildcat package and didn't have on an offensive lineman jersey."

Mosley was understandably nervous. After all, it was the first time in his life to play offensive tackle in a real game.

"Of course, I was nervous, real nervous," he said. "I remember getting into the huddle and couldn't hear a thing. The game was on national television and I had never played tackle in a game at any level, only at practice. But, after a few plays, I got the jitters out and I think I did OK."

Mosley did better than OK. Now, he's a veteran, expected to take on a major role.

"Brandon did benefit from A.J.'s injury," Grimes acknowledged. "He had to get ready immediately for more playing time. He had always been a tight end and defensive end. But he brought a different element. He's a tough, aggressive lineman. He was overshadowed last season by us having so many all-star caliber linemen, but this season, you'll see him play an even bigger part in the line's success."

Mosley pointed to the 19-play, 86-yard drive against Kentucky as the key time of the season for the national champions. That drive ate up the final 7:22 of the game, ending with a Byrum 24-yard field goal for the win.

Against Alabama, it was a 67-yard fourth quarter drive that won the game. Then, against Oregon in the desert, another final drive won the title on the game's final play.

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"To win in Lexington, we had to drive it down the field and score," he said. "There couldn't be a turnover and we couldn't punt. We had to score. It was the fourth quarter, but we still took it one play at a time.

"It was a similar situation in Tuscaloosa. The crowd was loud and the game was late, but we had been there before. Scoring was the only course we had. We knew that we could take charge, buckle down and get it done."

Grimes is counting on Mosley for that kind of leadership this season.

"Brandon has been a lead-by-example guy," he said. "Not necessarily quiet, but not a 'rah-rah' guy. I've told him that this team will need leadership. In the offseason, we talked about how younger players will follow him due to his work ethic. I've already seen some signs of that leadership."

Jared Cooper is another veteran who'll be counted on. A fifth-year senior, the 6-4, 300-pounder has seen limited action, largely due to the caliber of players ahead of him on the depth chart. At the end of spring practice, he was in the starting lineup.

"It has been an interesting experience the whole way through," Cooper said, looking back over his four years in Auburn. "Of course, you want to come in and play more. I had started four years in high school and was used to playing. But there has been great player after great player ahead of me so far. But, you have to maintain the right mindset. Bide your time and work hard. It helped me to watch those other guys. Now, it's my opportunity. It helped me in the long run."

The Brewton, Ala., native feels that the team's 'ups and downs' since he arrived contributed to the 2010 success.

His freshman year, the Tigers went 9-4 with a win over Clemson in the Chick-fil-A Bowl. A year later, they stumbled through a 5-7 season, which included the midseason dismissal of the offensive coordinator, then the departure of head coach Tommy Tuberville. The 2009 campaign followed the controversial hiring of Gene Chizik to head the program. There was the heartbreaking last minute loss to Alabama, and the Outback Bowl win over Northwestern.

Photo by Todd J. Van Ernst

Center Blake Burgess

And then, there was 2010.

"Our theme last season was 'Good to Great'," Cooper said. "This season, we know what 'great' looks like. We know that standard. We know the difference in what it takes to win six games versus what it takes to win 10 or more.

"For those of us who have been here for a while, it was a lot sweeter to experience this past season having gone through what happened before. There's a deeper level of respect for what we have, especially for those who lived through the 5-7 season. We've known the highs and lows."

Cooper has a unique perspective on the Auburn experience.

"Until I was in the tenth grade, we were all big Alabama fans," he admitted. "When I took recruiting trips, I went to both schools and had offers from both. It's just hard to describe, especially for people on the outside looking in, but being at Auburn feels like being at home. It really is family here."

Grimes has witnessed Cooper's dedication to football and to Auburn.

"You sort of see 'Coop' as being like Andrew McCain (Auburn offensive tackle, 2006-2009)," he said. "He didn't get to play as much early, then got that fresh opportunity as a senior and was a big contributor. 'Coop' is such a great young man. If you ask any group from this team who is willing to give everything he's got for Auburn, his name is at the top of the list."

Blake Burgess is another lineman thrust into a greater role in the spring due to the departure of so many seniors. At the end of practice, he was running with the first team at center. Like Cooper, he grew up an Alabama fan despite his grandfather playing fullback for Coach Shug Jordan in the early 1960s.

"I did grow up an Alabama fan," he said. But, when it came time for a college decision, he chose to walk-on at Auburn.

"I had some Division I-AA and Division II scholarship offers, but my family supported my decision," said Burgess, who was first-team All-State center at Vestavia Hills

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By Mike Barnes

Alabama Power Lineman

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High School south of Birmingham. "It was kind of crazy here. It was just after they made the decision to hire Coach Chizik, but after just a couple of visits here, I decided this is where I wanted to go."

Again like Cooper, Burgess has bided his time.

"Sure there have been times, like in two-a-days, those hot days when you're like 'Why am I doing this to myself'," he admitted. "But as soon as the season starts and you're under those lights, you know exactly why you're there."

Heading into the season, the offensive line will be in the spotlight. Mosley, Cooper, Burgess, junior John Sullen and others will be considered by many as the weak link in Auburn's attempt to have another successful season.

"From a fan's standpoint, I understand why so much importance is put on the offensive line and why people might have doubts," Cooper said. "We know that we have a lot of work to do, but the linemen who are stepping into these positions have been here for a while. We ended the spring with several seniors and juniors in the regular rotation. We might not have a lot of game experience, but A.J. (Greene) and I have been here for five years, and John Sullen and Brandon (Mosley) and some others are veterans."

Mosley agrees with Cooper's perspective.

"We don't really feel pressure," he said. "Our team expects us to step up.

"Everybody says Auburn lost all of its good linemen. We're out to prove people wrong. Overall, we don't have as much game time, but this is a strong group. I think that there might not be that much difference."

Auburn's returning linemen will be joined by one of the country's top-rated recruiting classes. Rivals.com rates the Tigers' offensive line class fifth best nationally. Reese Dismukes from Spanish Fort, Ala., was ranked the nation's No. 1 center. Christian Westerman was the No. 1 player in Arizona and the No. 3 offensive tackle in the country. And, Greg Robinson of Louisiana was the nation's No. 2 rated offensive guard.

"I'm not that big on rankings," Grimes said. "You don't know what you've done until a couple of years in most cases, especially with the offensive line. It usually takes longer to develop there than anywhere else on the team. You find out that you can't give up on a player too soon. The most highly recruited guy doesn't always end up as your best player."

That's what Grimes is looking for ... the best player. Actually, he's looking for five of them.

"It doesn't matter who it is, I'm looking for five guys that want to impose their will on the opposing defense, whether they are seniors or freshmen," he said. "Our quarterback and running backs will be successful if we do that. It's a mindset. We know that we're not in the newspapers and not on all of the awards shows. But our reward is when we are able to look each other in the eye and say we got it done today. We got it done.

"The big thing for me is to put on the field the toughest offensive line in the country. To be exceptional in any field, you have to get an identity, a vision. That's our vision at Auburn. Of course, it's something subjective, something that can't be measured."

But, there is something that can be measured ... wins and losses ... and championships. And, the 2010 Auburn offensive line set the standard. They are champions.

The 2011 line has big shoes to fill, but has confidence that it can be done.

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TROJANS PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER JERNIGAN

BY MATT LOWE

For the past four seasons, no player in the Sun Belt, or arguably nationally for that matter, meant more to his team than Jerrel Jernigan.

The 5-9, 185-pound receiver/punt/kick returner extraordinaire did a little bit of everything for Troy's offense and special teams en route to a record-breaking career. During his four years (2007-10) as a Trojan, Jernigan set the school records for receptions (262), receiving yards (3,128), receptions per game (5.2) and all-purpose yards (5,972). He also ranks sixth on the school's touchdown list (25) and third all-time in kick return yards (1,580).

Now that Jernigan is off to the NFL, it would be foolish to think he can just be "replaced." Guys like Jernigan are just too good to be simply "replaced." But head coach Larry Blakeney thinks it will be a group effort and it will start with some of the team's up-and-coming skill players.

"There won't be a way to replace Jerrel," Blakeney said. "But we are trying to find a way to replace all that production with four or five guys that Jerrel, Jason Bruce, Tebiarus Gill and Austin Silvoy furnished us at receiver. Of course Jerrel was a guy that went back inside and ran the football on speed sweeps, went back in there and ran the plays out of the direct snap, so there's a lot of production to replace when you look at it, but we've got a few guys that can give us some help there."

Chip Reeves, the team's leading returning pass catcher from a year ago (30 receptions for 515 yards and five TDs), Jamel Johnson (23 catches for 258 yards and three scores), Brett Moncrief (16 catches for 214 yards and a two scores) and Eric Thomas (nine catches for 120 yards and a score) are solid veterans coming back, but it will be crucial for the Trojans to find some playmakers in the slot, where Jernigan thrived.

One guy Blakeney thinks can play a role similar to Jernigan is Corey Johnson. Johnson's not a known commodity at the moment, but he's a good athlete with size. Johnson tallied 47 catches for 500 yards last year at Garden City Community College and also racked up 347 return yards.

"I think there's a guy named Corey Johnson that people may not know about considering he transferred form junior college," Blakeney said. "He had a good spring, not great because he was learning. He has some ability and has a little flair to get away like Jerel did."

Blakeney also mentioned the versatile Chris Anderson as a guy that can play multiple roles on offense. Anderson started six games at tailback a year ago and rushed for 388 yards and three scores. He also chipped in 19 catches for 119 yards and a TD. He can play both inside and outside in the team's spread offense and could be another option on the speed sweep that Troy employs.

"Chris Anderson is a guy that's a running back that's got really good vision," said Blakeney, whom Troy's field is now named after. "He can get on top about as good as any of our running backs but he doesn't quite have the pull-away speed after he gets to that final stage. He's also a guy that we've moved outside and played him at "H" (slot) some. He can be a guy that can be a multiple-type guy that can do things inside as well as outside."

One more player to keep an eye on at the H spot is 5-7, 165-pound Khary Franklin, who could also see time at kick returner. The former high school quarterback is quick as lightning and could be a big factor in Troy's passing game as a sophomore. He may also get a look as a Wildcat quarterback when the Trojans want to give the opposing defense a different look.

"He's a good special teams guy. He can cover and return," Blakeney said. "He's got a chance to be a Wildcat guy because he's physical. He's working hard to improve his receiving skills. He's a great kid and I think he'll wind up playing some ball and helping us."

At tailback, Troy returns one of the Sun Belt's best in Shawn Southward. Southward rushed for a team-high 623 yards and seven touchdowns on 115 carries, a 5.4-yard average. He also caught 19 passes for 190 yards and two TDs, proving his versatility.

Southward will be joined in the backfield by big fullback/H-back D.J. Taylor and former Prattville High School standout Justin Albert. Taylor added weight this offseason according to Blakeney and made strides as a runner and receiver during the spring. Albert, meanwhile, will be aiming for his first major action for the Trojans this season.

"We've been mainly a fullback/H-back with him (Taylor)," Blakeney said. "But he's gotten much, much better as a receiver and runner. And he's a big, strong guy. He's probably 230-235, so they (opposing defenses) don't like to tackle him when he comes roaring up through there. So I think he'll have an expanded role."

"He's a slot guy/running back," said Blakeney about Albert. "He got work at both the F (feature back) and H during the spring and it looks like he's going to be ready to help us."

So when fall rolls around, don't be surprised to see most of these names finding paydirt in Troy's high-scoring attack. After all, there was a time when Jernigan was an unknown, too.

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BRYAN ELLIS

BY BEN COOK

Ellis has paid his dues to get to this point

Bryan Ellis has had a painful career as a quarterback for the UAB Blazers. At least, the first three years were painful.

"I've had three shoulder surgeries my first two years here, then I finally got a chance to play and I broke my wrist on the first play against Texas A&M," Ellis said. "I'm pretty sure it was Von Miller that broke my wrist and he winds up being a first-round draft pick, so I guess that's not too bad.

"I went through a lot of adversity to get to where I'm at now. I guess that just makes it all the more sweeter," he said.

Where he is now is the unquestioned starting quarterback for the Blazers. He came off the bench in the third game of the 2010 season, a game in which UAB trailed the Troy Trojans 23-0 at one point. Ellis brought the Blazers back and hit Jackie Williams on a 44-yard Hail Mary for the winning touchdown on the last play of the game.

The miracle finish capped a 99-yard drive that consumed the final 1:09 of regulation. For the game, Ellis finished 23-of-37 for 360 yards and three touchdowns. He followed that up with a 29-of-55, 373-yard effort in a double overtime loss to Tennessee, 32-29.

He has been the starting quarterback ever since.

"It would have to be after the Tennessee game I got a lot of confidence. After the Troy game, after we came back and won, that gave me a lot of confidence as well, but I think playing in that environment (at Tennessee), playing in front of 100,000 people and seeing the success we had as a team that day... of course, you would rather win, but I think I knew that I could play at a high level at this level."

David Isabelle started the 2010 season as No. 1 on the quarterback depth chart, but Ellis got his chance when Isabelle was ineffective in the Troy game. The move to Ellis as No. 1 was one that was welcomed by the rest of the UAB offense. It's not that they didn't like Isabelle; it's just that with Ellis under center there would be more opportunities for the rest of the offense.

"I think as far as the offense goes, a lot of guys were happy just because they got to touch the ball more," Ellis said. "With me being back there I needed a lot of help, so I think that kind of excited some guys. We got to spread the ball around a lot more.

"What we were doing before was a lot more quarterback oriented with Joe (Webb) and Izzy (David Isabelle). I think it kind of excited a lot of guys to know that they were going to get the ball."

Ellis was less likely to tuck it and run as Isabelle did, so running backs Pat Shed and Michael Borne got to carry more of the load on offense and the wide receivers liked that Ellis was going to be throwing more.

Ellis finished the season with 25 touchdown passes and 2,940 yards on 231 completions in 411 pass attempts. The only drawback was the 12 interceptions he threw, something he worked hard on this spring.

"A big thing in our offense is we throw it down the field a lot, so you are going to throw interceptions sometimes, but I worked on this spring putting the ball where only my guy can make a play on it. I think I got a lot better at that this spring, but the only thing that matters is come the 12 Saturdays this fall," he said.

"That's definitely a big thing I am going to work on — not throwing interceptions — but then again you can't lose your big play mentality. You don't want to get too cautious with it. There's a fine line there between being too cautious and still making plays. I think I got a lot better this spring, but I guess we'll see come this fall."

Ellis sees a big year ahead for the Blazers. When asked if UAB could make a run toward getting the second bowl bid in UAB history, he was definite.

"Oh, there's no doubt. That's our goal and if we don't do that, then I look at this season as a failure. If we don't go to a bowl and if we don't compete for the Eastern side, then we didn't do what we were supposed to do this year. We've been here together as a coaching staff and as a team for five years, so there are no excuses left," Ellis said.

"We have a lot of talent. All of us are Coach Callaway's guys now and that's all we know is his way. Hopefully, we will get it done for him. We've got a chance to do something special for UAB, for this university and for this city," said Ellis.

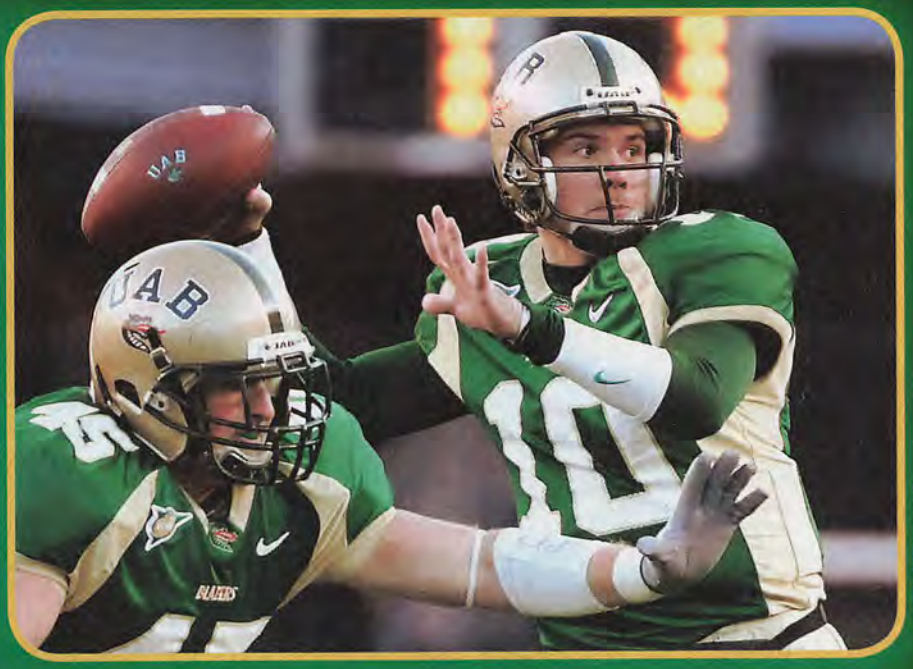

Photo Courtesy of UAB

Quarterback Bryan Ellis

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DEFENSIVE INTENSITY COULD EARN THAT EVASIVE RING

BY LYN SCARBROUGH

For Jacksonville State coach Jack Crowe, the five-year long interview lasted five minutes.

"When I called Chris Boone to talk about our defensive coordinator position, I asked him within five minutes if he wanted the job," Crowe recalled. "When he asked if I wanted him to come for an interview, I told him, 'No, you've had a five-year interview.' Fortunately for us, he felt like there was a reason to come to Jacksonville."

The reason for wanting Boone was simple.

"One of our top priorities is to win the Ohio Valley Conference championship," Crowe said when announcing that Boone, the defensive coordinator at OVC rival UT-Martin was joining his staff at the same position. "Chris is a good game day coach and an outstanding teacher. His experience can help us accomplish that goal."

It's not that the Gamecocks have been unsuccessful.

Jacksonville State has the best winning percentage of any Football Championship Series (FCS) school in the country in conference games — 77.4 percent. Their in-league record is better than Northern Iowa in the Missouri Valley (75.7 percent) or Appalachian State in the Southern Conference (69.6 percent).

"We've had a lot of wins, but not many rings," Crowe said.

For a while last season, the OVC ring and the national ring seemed possible. An early win over Ole Miss in Oxford got the country's attention. They were ranked in the Top 5 through early November.

But, things unraveled in the last four games, largely due to defense. They gave up 49 points in a loss at Eastern Kentucky, then surrendered 35 in a loss to Tennessee Tech.

They gave up only 17 points in the playoff loss to Wofford, but the Terriers led the Gamecocks in rushing offense, total offense and time of possession. In the fourth quarter, Wofford had the ball for over 12 minutes.

If Boone's UT-Martin credentials are an indicator, the 2011 Gamecock defense may be championship caliber. The Skyhawks led the OVC in 2010 in total defense, passing defense and passing efficiency defense.

Crowe will have another advantage — one with national championship background. Bill Oliver, who served as defensive coordinator at Alabama and Auburn, including a national title season in Tuscaloosa, joined the Gamecock staff as a defensive consultant.

Coaches will work with an experienced team led by talented seniors. Senior defensive end Monte Lewis is the leader on that side of the ball. In 2010, he had 37 tackles, 6.5 tackles for loss, four sacks and a fumble recovery.

"When we signed Monte, I didn't realize his upside," Crowe admitted. "I realized it during spring practice before his junior season. Davern Williams (defensive coach and former Troy teammate of All-Pro defensive lineman DeMarcus Ware) was next to me when Monte made a couple of plays. I asked Davern, 'Where did that come from' and he said, 'Coach, that's what DeMarcus was like.' That told me all I needed to know."

Lewis and the seniors understand their role.

"Our seniors know we set the standard for younger, inexperienced players," he said. "We have to lead by example. Our entire team has chemistry. We really do get along. The seniors had a cookout and talked about these things. We understand how important it is."

Gamecock opponents will face an aggressive defense.

"We have experience and speed," Lewis said. "Nobody is going to run over us, but if the ball gets to the open field, 11 guys will head toward the ball. Hard and intense ... that's how we play."

The defense won't carry the load alone. Jacksonville has a talented offense led by senior quarterback Marques Ivory. In 2010, he passed for 2,248 yards and 18 touchdowns.

"Monte and Marques have the heart and mind to go with strength and tangibles," Crowe said. "They're both intelligent. Marques is a math major, and tutors students in calculus. They are the ones that our other players watch. They are born leaders.

"This team has the largest group of experienced seniors that we've had here. They've given us signals for three seasons about what they could become."

The 2010 season was bittersweet, but also had a lot of positives.

"We did more to help our brand than ever before," Crowe said. "I've seen the benefits on how we're received on the road recruiting. Now, our challenge is to build on what we've accomplished."

"We know what it takes to get there now," Lewis said. "But, we don't want to just get to the playoffs this time. We want to win more games."

Crowe likes that approach from his team leaders. He knows that can result in more success.

"Monte's intensity is instinctive," he said. "He is an All-American. I'm not sure if he will be selected to those first-teams, but he is one."

Lindy's agrees. Lewis was chosen to the first-team defense on the 2011 FCS All-American team.

Don't be surprised if Crowe, Boone, Oliver, Lewis, Ivory and the other Gamecocks are wearing one of those rings at the end of the 2011 campaign.

Photo Courtesy of Jacksonville State

Monte Lewis

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SAMFORD

BULLDOGS BRING MORE SPEED TO SOUTHERN CONFERENCE RACE IN 2011

BY BEN COOK

When the Samford Bulldogs joined the Southern Conference in 2008, they knew the competition was going to be tough. They were right.

Last season, the Bulldogs were 2-6 in the league, but this season they return seven starters on offense, four on defense and a placekicker and are hoping to make a little more noise in the conference race.

"I think the conference has gotten stronger every year that we've been in there," head coach Pat Sullivan said. "Without question, App State has been the kingpin. Wofford and Elon have been right there at the top, not only in our conference, but also in the playoffs and in the Top 10 in the country. Georgia Southern last year was one game away from playing for it all. There were three teams out of our league that were in the playoffs — Georgia Southern went to the semi-finals and Wofford and App State both made it to the second round.

"We've got good quality from top to bottom. It's strong. Each week that you play you have to bring your 'A' game and you've got to stay healthy. Last year, we sort of got beat up in some areas and it hurt us," Sullivan said.

Aside from the normal SoCon games that are always challenging, the Bulldogs will end the season with a trip to Auburn to play the defending national champions.

"It's something our players and all our Samford family get excited about. We've gone to Ole Miss. We've gone to Florida State. We're going to Auburn this year and Kentucky next year and we will find a game like that in the years to come," said Sullivan, who won the 1971 Heisman Trophy as Auburn's quarterback.

But the main goal for Sullivan is to move the Bulldogs up in the Southern Conference.

"I'm excited about this team. I think that offensively we've probably got more speed than we've had at our skill positions. We're going to miss Chris Evans. He was a young man who rushed for the most yards in the history of the state of Alabama (4,575 yards) in his four years here. So we're going to miss him," he said.

"I think our young skill kids — we had three freshmen that started at wide receiver last year at one time or another — all of them can play. Riley Hawkins, who was our best threat and was not eligible to play last year, is back. I'm excited about the skill people we have. We've got Quin Roberson, Kelsey Pope, Chris Cephus, all of those guys have shown that they've got the ability to change ends of the field.

"We got a transfer from Southern Miss who I think is going to really help us," Sullivan said. "That's Zeke Walters, who played last year as a freshman."

"On our offensive line, we've lost a couple of players that we need to replace. We've got Ryan Dudchock at center and I think he's going to be a really good player. Quarterback Dustin Taliaferro has been our starter for the last three years, but we've got a young freshman named Trett Hardman, who I thought had an outstanding spring and he certainly is looking at some playing time next fall."

Taliaferro was 133-of-224 last season for 1,427 yards and five touchdowns but was intercepted nine times. In the spring game he was 5-of-7 for 69 yards and two scores. Hardman was 3-of-5 for 36 yards and Ben Neil was 6-of-9 for 64 yards and a score.

"At running back, we've got Fabian Truss, a young man from Shades Valley, who I think has got a chance to be a heck of a player," said Sullivan. "Mason Wald and Dave Strider are two more local players who will be our fullback-type players. And then we've got some young players we hope will come in and get in the mix a little bit."

In the Southern Conference it takes a solid game on both sides of the football to compete and Sullivan is optimistic about the Bulldogs' outlook on defense.

"Defensively, I think again, we've probably got more speed than we've ever had," Sullivan said.

"Starting up front we've got Alex Davis and Jeremy Towns, two guys that should be poised to have really good years. Jeremy didn't play for us last year. He had a hernia injury and was out. He's got a chance to be an all-conference player at the 3-technique. He's a big guy, about 6-3½, 6-4, 315. Alex Davis is a defensive end that is — again — a good player," he said.

"Our linebackers, I think we've got more speed there. Darion Sutton is a young man that has got an awful lot of potential. He'll be a sophomore next year. He's a good player. Sean Thompson is another outside linebacker that I think has got some ability and has been playing for us, along with Durell Hill. All those guys outside are some that should help us.

"Justin Shade has been in the middle. Keith Shoulders didn't go through spring, but we are expecting him to be a good player for us this year," Sullivan said.

"Secondary wise, we lost three starters. I think Alvin Hines really had a great spring and is poised to be as good a strong safety as there is in the league. One of our two corners is Corey White, who had an outstanding spring and I think he's got a lot of ability. He and Tae Lewis and Isaac Cooper, all those three guys, have a chance to give us strength there.

"Without question Cameron (Yaw) will be back as our kicker. It's time for him to have that breakout year. This will be his third year. We lost Bob Hooper, who has been our punter for the last four years. We have a kid named Greg Peranich, who right now looks set to take over that. So we're a little untested there. He's got a lot of work to do this summer to be ready for this fall," said Sullivan.

SEC RECRUITING

By Keith Niebuhr
Rivals.com

Alabama

Overview: The Tide finished with the No. 1 overall class for the third time in the past four years and did it by reaching into other areas. Much of Alabama's best work was done out of state. Alabama went to Florida to grab the country's top safety prospect, **Hasean Clinton-Dix**, along with five-star back **Demetrius Hart** — and pulled five-star offensive tackle **Cyrus Kouandjio**, who committed to Auburn on live TV on National Signing Day, only to have a change of heart, from Maryland. In-state, the Tide inked standouts such as linebacker **Brent Calloway** and receiver **Marvin Shinn**. Calloway also switched from Auburn at the last minute.

Headliner: Take your pick between Clinton-Dix, Hart and Kouandjio, all big-name recruits with immense talent who have promising futures. Of the three, the speedy Hart might have the best chance of contributing this fall. Long term, Kouandjio, who has an NFL type of body, probably has the highest upside.

Sleeper: Quarterback **Phillip Ely** is a prime candidate to redshirt this fall, and might not be ready to contribute his first few seasons in Tuscaloosa. But he's a solid, if not spectacular quarterback who has a track record of success. Alabama doesn't ask quarterbacks to win by themselves. The Tides likes players at that position who can manage games. That is something Ely does better than most.

Bottom Line: This class, as one might expect from the country's top-rated group, has a little bit of everything and addressed many of the Tide's needs. Nick Saban is a machine right now.

Georgia

Overview: The Bulldogs coaching staff set out last year to land the so-called "dream team," and it certainly met that goal. This group is talented, deep and has unbelievable star power, starting with defensive end **Ray Drew** and running back **Isaiah Crowell**, a pair of five-star recruits. Georgia also did very well at linebacker, landing **Amarlo Herrera**, **Kent Turene** (a one-time USC commit) and **Ramik Wilson**, a freakish athlete from Tampa. Receiver/defensive back **Malcolm Mitchell** and tight end **Jay Rome**, both Peach State natives, were also significant pickups, as was four-star quarterback **Christian LeMay**, who could be the signal caller of the future in Athens. All told, Georgia signed six Rivals100 recruits.

Headliner: It has to be Crowell. The Bulldogs needed more overall production, more consistency, more big plays from the running back and the big, yet speedy Crowell may just be the player to give it to them. Crowell has a chance to step into a starting role very early in his Georgia career.

Sleeper: Turene was only a three-star recruit, but he has a high ceiling. He's a big, physical player who moves well for a linebacker his size. He has said he might play outside linebacker, but his body probably is better suited for the inside.

Bottom Line: The Bulldogs needed a monster class to get the fanbase excited and they delivered in a big way. It's too soon to know how many in this group will contribute this fall, but in the long term this group has great promise.

LSU

Overview: It is no surprise that the Tigers did very well for themselves. And as is often the case, they cleaned up in-state, getting five-star prospects **La'El Collins**, an offensive tackle, **Anthony Johnson**, a defensive tackle, and **Jarvis Landry**, a wide receiver, to Baton Rouge. Other notable signings included four-star defensive linemen **Mickey Johnson** and **Jermauria Rasco**, two players with major potential, and junior college quarterback **Zach Mettenberger**, who once was a Georgia Bulldog. Landry wasn't the only big-name receiver in the class; LSU also snagged **Odell Beckham Jr.**, a speedy player from New Orleans. Quarterback **Stephen Rivers**, younger brother of NFL signal caller Philip Rivers, is another intriguing prospect.

Headliner: It's probably Johnson, a big-time tackle who plays with reckless abandon and already has a body that is ready for the SEC. Nicknamed "the Freak," Johnson has the potential to be one of the Tigers' next great interior linemen, and they've had many.

Sleeper: Outside linebacker **Trevon Randle** is a versatile prospect from Texas who moves well enough to play the run and drop into coverage when necessary. He's not the biggest linebacker, but makes a living by having a great nose for the ball.

Bottom Line: Once again, Les Miles and his staff have compiled an impressive class. That might not have happened if the Tigers didn't have their state on lockdown. At this point in time, LSU is getting just about any homegrown player it wants. That isn't likely to change anytime soon.

TOP 20 INCOMING SEC RECRUITS

Rk.	Player	Ht./Wt.	Pos.	Hometown/School	College
1.	Jadeveon Clowney	6-6/247	DE	Rock Hill (S.C.) South Pointe	South Carolina
2.	Cyrus Kouandjio	6-7/322	OT	Hyattesville (Md.) DeMatha	Alabama
3.	La'El Collins	6-5/285	OT	Baton Rouge (La.) Redemptorist	LSU
4.	Hasean Clinton-Dix	6-2/190	S	Orlando (Fla.) Dr. Phillips	Alabama
5.	Ray Drew	6-5/243	DE	Thomasville (Ga.) Thomas County Central	Georgia
6.	Anthony Johnson	6-4/298	DT	New Orleans (La.) O. Perry Walker	LSU
7.	Jarvis Landry	5-11/178	WR	Lutcher (La.) High	LSU
8.	Demetrius Hart	5-8/190	RB	Orlando (Fla.) Dr. Phillips	Alabama
9.	Kris Frost	6-3/210	LB	Matthews (N.C.) Butler	Auburn
10.	C.J. Johnson	6-3/235	LB	Philadelphia (Miss.) High	Ole Miss
11.	Isaiah Crowell	5-11/210	RB	Columbus (Ga.) Carver	Georgia
12.	Christian Westerman	6-5/288	OT	Chandler (Ariz.) Hamilton	Auburn
13.	Malcolm Mitchell	6-1/187	CB	Valdosta (Ga.) High	Georgia
14.	Jeff Driskel	6-3/225	QB	Oviedo (Fla.) Hagerty	Florida
15.	Marcus Roberson	6-1/170	CB	Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas	Florida
16.	Brent Calloway	6-1/210	LB	Russellville (Ala.) High	Alabama
17.	Mike Blakely	5-9/194	RB	Bradenton (Fla.) Manatee	Florida
18.	Jeoffrey Pagan	6-4/272	DE	Asheville (N.C.) High	Alabama
19.	Jesse Williams	6-4/330	DT	Yuma (Ariz.) Arizona Western C.C.	Alabama
20.	Odell Beckham Jr.	5-10/165	WR	New Orleans (La.) Isidore Newman School	LSU

Auburn

Overview: The Tigers didn't have the finish they were hoping for (two prominent players flipped to Alabama at the last minute), yet they still produced an exceptional top-10 class. Five-star linebacker **Kris Frost** is the second-rated player nationally at his position. Auburn pulled him from North Carolina. On the offensive line, Auburn signed a very good group. In fact, it arguably is the SEC's best. **Christian Westerman**, the country's No. 3 tackle, **Reese Dismukes**, the top-ranked center, and **Greg Robinson** are big-timers. The same can be said of quarterback **Kiehl Frazier**, an elite dual-threat player from Arkansas. The running game should be bolstered by four-star backs **Quan Bray** and **Tre Mason**.

Headliner: Frost has the highest ranking among the class, but Westerman and Dismukes might have been more vital to the program. As Auburn moves forward, they can provide the Tigers with two solid players on the interior. Finding premier centers isn't easy, so landing Dismukes was significant.

Sleeper: Outside linebacker **Justin Garrett** has the type of speed that should serve him well in the SEC. Garrett needs to gain weight, but has an excellent frame and is faster than most linebackers. He covers a lot of ground and packs quite a punch for a player his size.

Bottom Line: Coming off a national championship, Auburn didn't get complacent. Instead, the Tigers signed a top-10 class that addressed numerous needs, particularly on the offensive line. Gene Chizik has done an excellent job on the recruiting trail since arriving at Auburn.

Florida

Overview: Florida only signed 19 players, but while this class is lacking in numbers, it is high on quality. **Jeff Driskel**, the country's No. 1 pro-style quarterback, and **Jacoby Brissett**, also an outstanding prospect at the position, helped Florida address a major need. In the secondary, the Gators landed in-state standouts **Louchiez Purifoy**, **Marcus Roberson** and **De'Ante Saunders**. Florida also snatched speedy tailback **Mike Blakely**, a player who missed spring practice with a shoulder injury but has a bright future. In addition to Driskel and Brissett, the Gators offense, which will have a new pro-style look in 2011, also landed **Hunter Joyer**, the country's No. 1 fullback, and **A.C. Leonard**, the No. 5 tight end.

Headliner: On some teams this is difficult to pinpoint. For Florida, it's not. Driskel is a high-profile player who committed to the Gators early and stuck by that pledge through a somewhat surprising coaching change. He early enrolled to get a head start and that should serve him well this fall. Driskel has a chance to be the No. 2 quarterback, and could be thrust into a more prominent role should inconsistent starter John Brantley struggle.

Sleeper: Defensive end **Clay Burton** has the speed off the edge to potentially be an early factor on a team looking for playmakers at that spot. Even though he was only a three-star prospect, Burton, younger brother to Florida player Trey Burton, had several big-time offers.

Bottom Line: It wasn't a great first class for first-year coach Will Muschamp, but he didn't have a ton of time with which to work. Holding things together after Urban Meyer's sudden departure was priority No. 1, and at that, Muschamp and his staff did well.

Tennessee

Overview: The Vols signed 27 players and in the process addressed several major needs. Receiver **DeAnthony Arnett**, tight end **Cameron Clear**, defensive tackle **Maurice Couch** and linebackers **A.J. Johnson** and **Curt Maggitt** are among the most talented of the newcomers. Each could potentially contribute in 2011. Because the Vols are thin on the defensive line, Couch, a junior college recruit, might end up being a starter. Tennessee isn't that strong at linebacker either and that may give Johnson just the opening he needs to break into the rotation. Maggitt is an intriguing prospect whom the Vols beat out Florida to get. While he might not have the necessary weight to be a factor this season, most believe he's a gifted athlete that has an incredibly bright future.

Headliner: Because of need — and his own ability — Johnson could get lots of action this season: he physically is ready to contribute early, that's for sure. Johnson has tremendous size and great athleticism, and is a good fit with the Vols, who'd like to get bigger linebackers on the field.

Sleeper: **Jordan Williams**, a defensive tackle from Florida, is potentially a big steal for the Vols. Williams, whose upside is huge, has a chance to earn some early playing time in 2011. He has an excellent frame and is quite athletic for his size.

Bottom Line: Vols coach Derek Dooley now has two recruiting classes under his belt, and with each he appears to have bettered the program. This class lacks big names, but not solid players.

South Carolina

Overview: The Gamecocks put an exclamation point on a solid class with the signing of five-star defensive end **Jadeveon Clowney**, the country's No. 1 recruit and arguably the best prospect in several years. Clowney grabbed the headlines, but it's worth noting that South Carolina landed a lot of nice players. In fact, the Gamecocks also picked up several solid defensive linemen, including tackle **Phillip Dukes**, a physically impressive talent who could compete for playing time from Day 1. On offense, the Gamecocks signed three solid receivers — **K.J. Brent**, **Damiere Byrd** and **Shamier Jeffery**, along with the state's best offensive tackle, **Brandon Shell**. Four-star safety **Sheldon Royster** and 6-5 tight end **Jerell Adams** were other excellent gets.

Headliner: Clearly, it's Clowney, whose signing ceremony was like a national holiday in his native South Carolina. Clowney is a rare player who combines an unreal body with sound technique and a great motor. He plays hard every down and that should serve him well in college. Odds are, he'll be an opening-day starter.

Sleeper: The younger brother of standout Gamecocks receiver Alshon Jeffery, **Shamier Jeffery** has the potential to become a solid SEC player in time. It won't be easy to match what his sibling has accomplished, but Jeffery certainly could develop into a very good player.

Bottom Line: The signing of Clowney was significant for many reasons, most notably the following: 1. He's incredibly talented and was greatly needed. 2. It provided South Carolina with some national exposure. Both give Steve Spurrier something on which to build.

Ole Miss

Overview: After a disappointing season, the Rebels got healthy in a big way on the recruiting trail. Getting five-star linebacker **C.J. Johnson**, a one-time Mississippi State commit, to sign was huge. He easily was the most sought-after player in the state. Don't overlook the Rebels' stellar class of receivers, which included **Nickolas Brassell**, **Donte Moncrief** and **Tobias Singleton**, and arguably is the league's best. All three are Rivals250 prospects; Brassell checks in at No. 51 overall. Four-star offensive tackle **Aaron Morris**, another Rivals250 recruit, is the other headliner

on offense. On the other side of the football, the Rebels complemented the signing of Johnson by inking linebackers **Keith Lewis** and **Marcus Mayers**.

Headliner: By a mile, it's Johnson, the country's No. 2 inside linebacker. A tremendous talent who combines great size with tremendous athleticism, he covers a ton of ground and is a playmaking machine. Most suspect he will have a prominent role this fall.

Sleeper: This is another easy call. It's **Senquez Golson**, a three-star prospect who probably is one of the most underrated signees in the SEC. Golson is an athletic cornerback with excellent speed and a solid build. It wouldn't be a shock to see him earn meaningful minutes in 2011. The Rebels believe his future is awfully bright.

Bottom Line: Give Ole Miss coach Houston Nutt credit. Just when it looked as if the tide was completely shifting in Mississippi toward Starkville, he worked his magic and produced an excellent class.

Arkansas

Overview: In the SEC, if you're not among the top-10 recruiting classes nationally, nobody is talking about you. But the truth is, the Razorbacks didn't exactly do poorly as evidenced by their No. 24 national ranking. This class starts on the offensive line, where the Razorbacks signed five players, including the top three linemen from inside their home state — **Brey Cook**, **Marcus Danenhauer** and **Mitch Smothers**. Cook and Smothers each were Under Armour All-Americans. Arkansas did well for itself at quarterback, too, where the Razorbacks hope they landed their signal-caller of the future with **Brandon Allen**, a player who is known for his pinpoint accuracy. Four-star receiver **Marquel Wade** is the other most notable offensive signing. On defense, speedy four-star cornerback **Tevin Mitchel** also is a Rivals250 member.

Headliner: Cook, a four-star offensive tackle, has as good of a frame as just about any player in the country at his position. He early enrolled this spring and is expected to play quite a bit in 2011. He might even find his way into a starting spot.

Sleeper: The stock of **Lonnie Gosha**, a defensive tackle recruit from Florida, dropped significantly after a less-than-stellar senior season. But Arkansas may have gotten itself a good one if Gosha can learn to play with a little more energy and effort.

Bottom Line: In other leagues, this class would have generated more attention. Regardless, it looks as if Bobby Petrino restocked the program with a fair amount of talent.

Mississippi State

Overview: After winning nine games in 2010, more was expected of Mississippi State on the recruiting trail. But after the exit of defensive coordinator Manny Diaz to Texas, the Bulldogs had one significant player (five-star linebacker C.J. Johnson) flip to Ole Miss and they then lost a few key battles to both the Rebels and Auburn. That said, this class isn't exactly a dud. Far from it. It still, in fact, ranked ahead of classes at programs such as Missouri, UCLA and West Virginia. Much of the Bulldogs' best work was done on the interior, where they signed nine players, including defensive tackle **P.J. Jones**. **Joseph Morrow**, who is 6-5, and a solid receiving class that also includes **Taveze Calhoun** and **Devin Fosselman**. **Dak Prescott** is a dual-threat quarterback whose skills should allow him to fit in nicely in Starkville. Big-hitting safety **Darion Arrington**, the 11th-rated player from Mississippi, should be a nice addition to the Bulldogs' already stout defense.

Headliner: Jones was a must get, especially since the Bulldogs beat out Ole Miss to sign him. He is the team's lone four-star recruit.

Sleeper: **Darius Slay** is a player few people know about, but he should play a major role this season. A standout in junior college last year, the defensive back might be the most ready member of the class to step into a prominent role.

Bottom Line: Dan Mullen has proven to be an excellent recruiter through the years. This wasn't his best work, but indicators point to it being the exception.

Kentucky

Overview: Losing out on four-star linebacker Lamar Dawson, an in-state product who stunned many by signing with Southern California, was difficult for the Wildcats to take, but at Kentucky there is a belief this signing class was among the most balanced the program has landed in recent years. The Wildcats did very well to get impact safety **Glenn Faulkner** from Illinois and tailback **Marcus Caffey** from Atlanta. Both should contribute in 2011. Faulker is a four-star prospect. Caffey turned down offers from Arkansas and South Carolina to ink with the Wildcats, who certainly have a need in the backfield. Kentucky also inked the best two offensive linemen in the state, **Darrian Miller** and **Zach West**, along with versatile athlete **Bubba Tandy**.

Headliner: Talk about a no-brainer. Faulkner, who competed in the 2011 U.S. Army All-American Bowl, far and away is the top recruit in the group. He is ranked 128th overall, and eighth among safeties. There is little doubt he will see the field early in his college career.

Sleeper: Tandy is a three-star athlete who isn't well-known outside the state and didn't have a ton of major offers. But he's a versatile player whom the Wildcats are hoping might possibly step into the role vacated by receiver Randall Cobb, who left early for the NFL.

Bottom Line: This is a good class for Joker Phillips. Of Kentucky's 24 signees, 22 are three-star players or better.

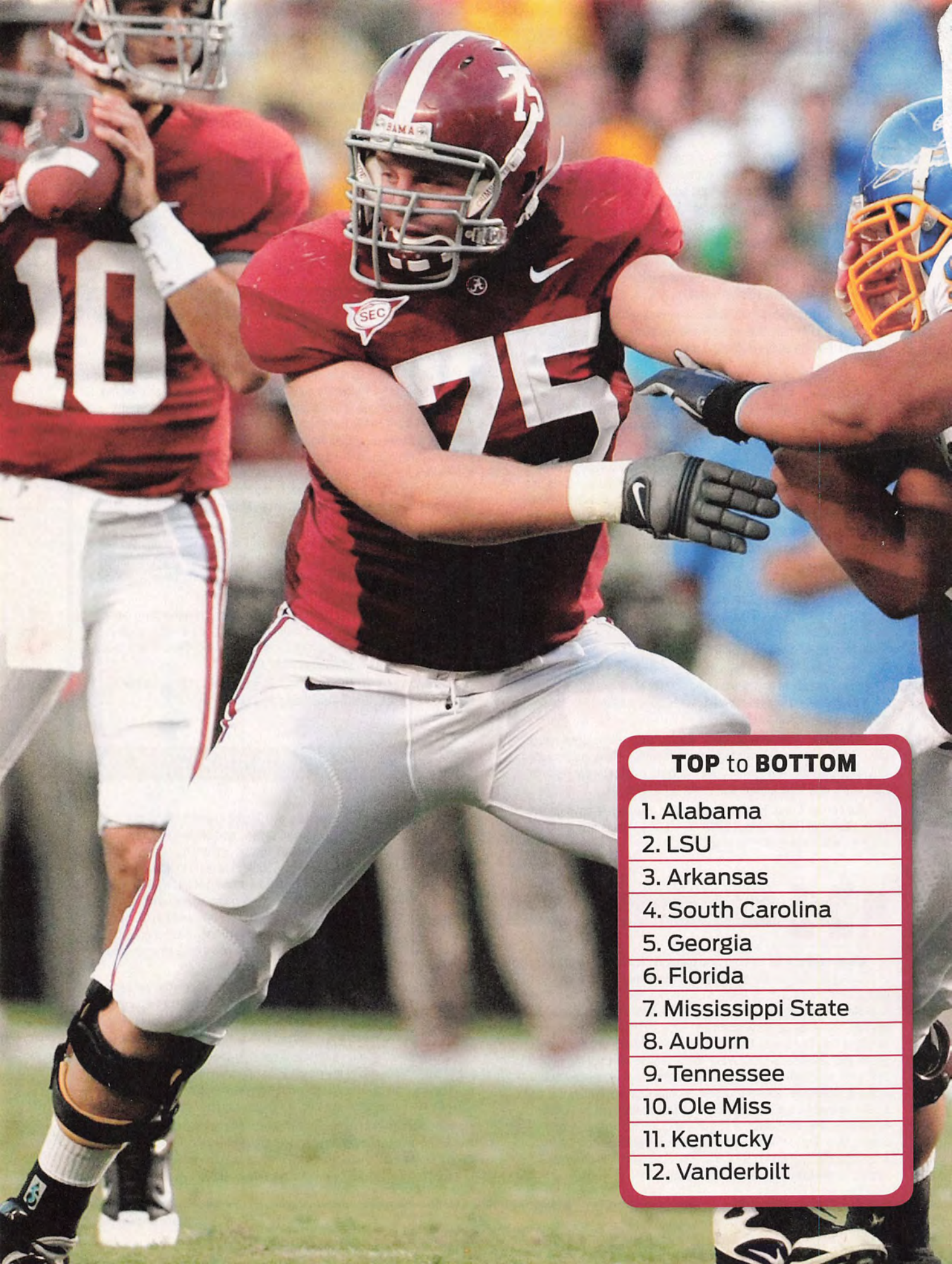
Vanderbilt

Overview: New Vanderbilt coach James Franklin didn't have much time to put together a class, but found several nice players who can become contributors in Nashville. **Joshua Grady**, a quarterback from Florida, arguably is the top athlete in the group. He led his team to the state finals last December, and could help perpetuate a winning attitude within the program. Offensive guard **Jake Bernstein**, who should play early, and tight end **Dillon van der Wal**, also were excellent gets. Because the Commodores are thin on the offensive line, Bernstein will have a great opportunity to contribute in 2011. **Larry Franklin**, a big defensive back who could also play linebacker, is a talented player with a great built.

Headliner: It has to be Grady, an excellent player who will begin his career at quarterback but is versatile enough to play either receiver or defensive back. Look for the Commodores to get the ball in his hands this season in "wildcat" situations because of his great playmaking ability.

Sleeper: Originally a Maryland commit, **Jimmy Stewart** could be one of those diamonds in the rough. Still somewhat raw, he has the type of build where he could easily gain 30 or 40 pounds. Stewart could play either linebacker or defensive end, which gives his coaches some options.

Bottom Line: Although Vanderbilt's class ranks as the worst in the SEC, it really and truly wasn't a bad group given the timeframe with which Franklin had to work. In fact, it may have exceeded expectations. All things considered, Franklin is off to a decent start.



TOP to **BOTTOM**

1. Alabama
2. LSU
3. Arkansas
4. South Carolina
5. Georgia
6. Florida
7. Mississippi State
8. Auburn
9. Tennessee
10. Ole Miss
11. Kentucky
12. Vanderbilt

Wanna win the West? Bama Would Like a Word

When Steve Spurrier took over at South Carolina five years ago, his hope was to put some hardware in the trophy case.

Step one occurred last season with the school's first SEC East Division championship. Next step: Win the SEC.

With Tennessee in a tailspin, Georgia rebuilding and Florida hiring an unproven head coach, the Gamecocks are favored to win the East again. South Carolina has the best running back-receiver combination in the SEC. The question mark is at quarterback, where the top returning passer, Stephen Garcia, was suspended in the spring for the fifth time.

Georgia should rebound from its first losing season under Mark Richt, thanks to a bright young quarterback and a loaded recruiting class.

Florida has its share of star recruits on campus, but quarterback John Brantley hasn't shown he can win at this level, but also hasn't yet tried with the Gators' new QB guru, Charlie Weis. Tennessee has only nine seniors on the team, and just four project to start.

The West Division will be a three-team race: Alabama, LSU and Arkansas. The Crimson Tide is still reeling from blowing a 24-0 home-field lead against eventual national champion Auburn. LSU needs productive quarterback play to contend. Arkansas might miss quarterback Ryan Mallett, but Bobby Petrino has assembled a talented team.

Auburn likely will take the biggest slide, going from 14-0 to possibly around .500. Mississippi State is on the rise, but matching last season's nine-win total will be difficult.

EAST DIVISION

Garcia passed for more than 3,000 yards last season, leading South Carolina to a division-clinching win at Florida and the coveted East title. But Garcia has never been as dedicated as Spurrier would like.

"If Garcia doesn't make it back," Spurrier said. "we have complete confidence Connor Shaw can run the offense."

Whoever the quarterback, he'll have two terrific weapons on his side. Marcus Lattimore emerged as one of the nation's top running backs, rushing for 1,197 yards and scoring 19 touchdowns. Alshon Jeffery caught 88 passes for 1,517 yards and could be a top five draft pick if he comes out after next season.

Georgia's Aaron Murray was outstanding as a redshirt freshman, passing for

Southeastern Conference Picks

SEC EAST	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. South Carolina	Terrific 1-2 punch at RB-WR; defense is solid; Gamecocks learned how to win.	If Stephen Garcia isn't back, unproven Connor Shaw has to be dependable.	South Carolina has enough talent to repeat as East champions, even without Garcia.
2. Georgia	QB Aaron Murray showed flashes of brilliance; defense taking to 3-4 scheme.	Lost WR A.J. Green to NFL; O-line still a concern; haven't won big games lately.	Look for rebound season behind Murray, an improved defense and a strong recruiting class.
3. Florida	New OC Charlie Weis can help fix QB John Brantley; Gators still a talented team.	Not blessed with skilled WRs or power runner; All-American CB Janoris Jenkins booted in spring.	Gators have talent, but don't expect first-year coach Will Muschamp to have a mistake-free season.
4. Tennessee	Good young talent on offense; Vols using same schemes for successive years.	Front seven on defense is suspect; UT doesn't have enough depth anywhere.	Another six-win season is likely due to lack of depth, run game concerns and defensive line.
5. Kentucky	LB Danny Trevathan is a stud; QB Morgan Newton had solid spring.	Lost versatile Randall Cobb and RB Derrick Locke; defense appears average.	Offense will miss Cobb and the defense will struggle. A sixth straight bowl bid is in question.
6. Vanderbilt	SEC-high 19 starters back, RB-KOR specialist Warren Norman returns from injury.	SEC-high 19 starters back ... from a team that was flat-out dreadful. Can these guys play?	New coach James Franklin inherits a talent-short roster; four wins would be a success.
SEC WEST			
1. Alabama	Trent Richardson is an elite running back; defense again is outstanding; team is hungry.	Lost Heisman-winning RB Mark Ingram, WR Julio Jones and DL Marcell Dareus.	Tide will make amends for three-loss season by winning West and SEC title ... maybe more.
2. LSU	QB Jordan Jefferson finished strong last season; the defense is stout again.	Lost 1,000-yard rusher, top WR, best DL and All-American CB Patrick Peterson.	If the quarterback plays well, LSU has all pieces in place to win West and take out Bama.
3. Arkansas	Great at WR and RB; QB Tyler Wilson might not be big drop from Ryan Mallett.	Could miss Mallett's big-play ability; lost three starters on O-line, TE D.J. Williams.	Hogs will again outscore a lot of teams, could post another 10-win season.
4. Miss. State	Returns QB and RB who scored 20 TDs; won nine games for first time since 1999.	First four SEC games a challenge; won't sneak up on anybody; lost three key defenders.	Dan Mullen beat Georgia, Florida and Michigan, but State will be hard-pressed to win nine.
5. Auburn	RB Michael Dyer is a budding star; O-coordinator Gus Malzahn returned.	Lost Heisman winning QB and All-American DT; return only eight starters.	Without Cam Newton to bail 'em out, Tigers could hover around .500 mark in SEC.
6. Ole Miss	Rebels return RB Brandon Bolden, five OL starters; DE Kentrell Locket granted sixth year.	QB position a concern; lost both DTs; eight teams scored at least 30 points on Ole Miss.	Rebels are restless, having fallen behind Mississippi State; Houston Nutt hasn't recruited well enough.

Lindy's 2011 ALL-SEC Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Aaron Murray	So.	Georgia
RB	Marcus Lattimore	So.	South Carolina
RB	Trent Richardson	Jr.	Alabama
WR	Alshon Jeffery	Jr.	South Carolina
WR	Greg Childs	Sr.	Arkansas
TE	Orson Charles	Jr.	Georgia
C	William Vlachos	Sr.	Alabama
OL	Barrett Jones	Jr.	Alabama
OL	Cordy Glenn	Sr.	Georgia
OL	Bobby Massie	Jr.	Ole Miss
OL	Larry Warford	Jr.	Kentucky
AP	Brandon Boykin	Sr.	Georgia
K	Blair Walsh	Sr.	Georgia

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Jake Bequette	Sr.	Arkansas
DL	Devin Taylor	Jr.	South Carolina
DL	Josh Chapman	Sr.	Alabama
DL	Kentrell Lockett	Sr.	Ole Miss
LB	Danny Trevathan	Sr.	Kentucky
LB	Dont'a Hightower	Jr.	Alabama
LB	Courtney Upshaw	Sr.	Alabama
DB	Mark Barron	Sr.	Alabama
DB	Stephon Gilmore	Jr.	South Carolina
DB	Robert Lester	Jr.	Alabama
DB	Morris Claiborne	Jr.	LSU
P	Drew Butler	Sr.	Georgia

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	Tyler Wilson	Jr.	Arkansas
RB	Knile Davis	Jr.	Arkansas
RB	Michael Dyer	So.	Auburn
WR	Tavarres King	Sr.	Georgia
WR	Joe Adams	Sr.	Arkansas
TE	Brandon Barden	Sr.	Vanderbilt
C	Travis Swanson	So.	Arkansas
OL	Bradley Sowell	Sr.	Ole Miss
OL	Alvin Bailey	So.	Arkansas
OL	D.J. Fluker	So.	Alabama
OL	Ja'Waun James	So.	Tennessee
AP	Andre Debose	So.	Florida
K	Zach Hocker	So.	Arkansas

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

DL	Kendrick Adams	Sr.	LSU
DL	Sam Montgomery	So.	LSU
DL	Malik Jackson	Sr.	Tennessee
DL	Kwame Geathers	So.	Georgia
LB	Jerry Franklin	Sr.	Arkansas
LB	Chris Marve	Sr.	Vanderbilt
LB	Jon Bostic	Jr.	Florida
DB	Brandon Boykin	Sr.	Georgia
DB	Johnthan Banks	Jr.	Mississippi State
DB	Casey Hayward	Sr.	Vanderbilt
DB	Matt Elam	So.	Florida
P	Tyler Campbell	Jr.	Ole Miss

3,049 yards and 24 touchdowns, although he did stumble in a 10-6 bowl loss to Central Florida. Murray won't have A.J. Green as a target, but Tavarres King, Orson Charles and freshman tailback Isaiah Crowell could make the offense better. The defense seems to have adjusted to the new 3-4 scheme installed last season.

At Florida, Brantley might flourish under Weis, but the Gators aren't stocked at receiver and the run game will depend on speedy but small running backs.

After a 2-6 start last season, Tennessee managed to win its last four regular-season games against a soft schedule. That provides hope, yet the Vols are still a year away from making noise in the SEC.

Kentucky will be hard-pressed to make a sixth straight bowl appearance; Vanderbilt returns an SEC-high 21 starters from a miserable 2-10 team.

WEST DIVISION

Alabama was favored to repeat as national champions last year but succumbed to the pressure of back-to-back titles. The gut-wrenching loss was to Auburn, after leading 24-0 in the first half.

Tide coach Nick Saban posted signs that read "never again." Saban said last year's team never learned to compete and didn't want to be coached. Don't expect deja vu. Alabama is breaking in a new quarterback, but Trent Richardson is one of the nation's top running backs and the Tide returns nine starters from the SEC's top-ranked defense.

LSU quarterback Jordan Jefferson finished strong last season, earning praise from coach Les Miles. If Jefferson is effective, everything else is in place. LSU is solid at the skill positions, and defensive coordinator John Chavis will have another stout group.

Arkansas hopes Tyler Wilson will be as effective as he was in a strong outing against Auburn a year ago. The Hogs have a 1,300-yard rusher in Knile Davis, the best receiving corps in the SEC and what appears to be an improved defense.

Auburn, which returns an SEC-low six starters, will find out just how much it misses Heisman Trophy winning quarterback Cam Newton and All-American defensive tackle Nick Fairley.

Dan Mullen has made Mississippi State relevant with wins over Florida, Georgia and Michigan, but the Bulldogs won't sneak up on anybody this season.

— Jimmy Hyams

Most Valuable Player

Marcus Lattimore
RB, South Carolina

Offensive Player of the Year

Trent Richardson
RB, Alabama

Defensive Player of the Year

Dont'a Hightower
LB, Alabama

Newcomer of the Year

Isaiah Crowell
RB, Georgia

HONOR ROLL

Most accurate passer	Aaron Murray	Georgia
Strongest arm	Tyler Bray	Tennessee
Best scrambler	Chris Relf	Mississippi State
Coolest in the clutch	Blair Walsh	Georgia
Toughest to bring down	Marcus Lattimore	South Carolina
Best hands	Alshon Jeffery	South Carolina
Most dangerous deep threat	Greg Childs	Arkansas
Best pass blocker	Cordy Glenn	Georgia
Best run blocker	Barrett Jones	Alabama
Best cover corner	Stephon Gilmore	South Carolina
Best pass rusher	Devin Taylor	South Carolina
Special teams demon	Sam Armbrust	Arkansas

THE **BIG** ONES

Sept. 3	
LSU vs. Oregon (Dallas)	Ducks take another SEC shot after falling to Auburn in title game.
Georgia vs. Boise State (Atlanta)	Dawgs routed Broncos last time teams met in 2005 opener.
Sept. 10	
Alabama at Penn State	Tide defense bottled up Joe Paterno, Nittany Lions last year.
South Carolina at Georgia	Outcome could decide who represents East in SEC title game.
Sept. 15	
LSU at Mississippi State	Tigers have won 18 of 19, but upstart Bulldogs came close in '09.
Sept. 17	
Auburn at Clemson	Auburn needed OT to tame the ACC Tigers last year.
Sept. 24	
Arkansas at Alabama	Tide has won 19 straight SEC openers; second-half rally hounded Hogs.
LSU at West Virginia	Give LSU credit for playing in Morgantown, a true bees' nest.
Oct. 1	
Alabama at Florida	Teams split SEC title games in 2009-10, Tide cruised last year.
Arkansas vs.Texas A&M (Dallas)	Third straight trip to Cowboys palace for former SWC rivals.
Auburn at South Carolina	Fourth-quarter meltdown cost Gamecocks chance to upset Auburn in '10.
Oct. 8	
Auburn at Arkansas	Auburn O-coordinator Guz Malzahn faces former team again.
Florida at LSU	LSU must hold serve at home to keep pace in West Division race.
Oct. 15	
Florida at Auburn	Though in different divisions, loss could prove costly in SEC race.
Oct. 22	
Tennessee at Alabama	Bama hopes to win SEC; UT hopes to gain respect against rival.
Auburn at LSU	Home team has won 10 of 11; LSU won't have to tackle Cam Newton.
Oct. 29	
Florida-Georgia (Jacksonville)	Gators have won 19 of 22; Mark Richt might need win for job security.
Nov. 5	
LSU at Alabama	Les Miles got huge win last season vs. former LSU coach Nick Saban.
South Carolina at Arkansas	Might be a must-win for either team to stay in division chase.
Nov. 12	
Auburn at Georgia	SEC's oldest rivalry, Auburn ended Dawgs' four-game win streak in 2010.
Florida at South Carolina	Spurrier clinched USC's first East title with win at old stomping grounds.
Nov. 25	
Arkansas at LSU	This Friday Battle for the Boot could also be battle for West title.
Nov. 26	
Alabama at Auburn	Auburn rallied from 24-0 deficit in historic comeback at Bama last year.
FSU at Florida	Gators had six-game win streak snapped by Seminoles, 31-7 in '10.
Clemson at South Carolina	SC pounded in-state rivals for second straight year, but has lost 10 of 14.

MARCUS LATTIMORE

Photo by Frankie Creel-US PRESSWIRE

BOWL CONNECTIONS

SEC Champ
BCS (national title game if ranked #1 or #2, otherwise Sugar)

SEC #2	Capital One vs. Big Ten
SEC #3-4	Outback vs. Big Ten
SEC #3-4	Cotton vs. Big 12
SEC #5-6	Chick-Fil-A vs. ACC
SEC #5-6	Gator Bowl vs. Big Ten
SEC #7-8	Music City vs. ACC
SEC #7-8	Liberty vs. Conference USA
SEC #7-9	Papajohn's.com vs. Big East

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Dont'a Hightower	LB	Alabama	Jr.	Great size, instincts for position.
2. Alshon Jeffery	WR	South Carolina	Jr.	Terrific talent, another A.J. Green.
3. Trent Richardson	RB	Alabama	Jr.	Might be better than Mark Ingram.
4. Devin Taylor	DE	South Carolina	Jr.	Outstanding pass rusher, great first step.
5. Mark Barron	DB	Alabama	Sr.	Standout safety with feel for game.
6. Stephon Gilmore	DB	South Carolina	Jr.	Skilled athlete, plays both ways.
7. Greg Childs	WR	Arkansas	Sr.	Tall, talented, dangerous deep threat.
8. Knile Davis	RB	Arkansas	Jr.	Rushed for 1,300 yards in '10; great balance.
9. Courtney Upshaw	LB	Alabama	Sr.	At 6-2, 265, great size for 3-4 LB.
10. Dre Kirkpatrick	CB	Alabama	Jr.	Has the size that the NFL will work with.

Get Coordinated: Coaching Changes Include High-Profile Assistants

When Urban Meyer suddenly resigned for the second time at Florida — this time for real, for now anyway — one of the nation's plum jobs was open for the second time in seven years.

And for the second time in 10 years, Gators athletic director Jeremy Foley hired an unproven assistant coach to take the reins.

Will Muschamp, a former Georgia player who was defensive coordinator and coach-in-waiting at Texas, was handpicked to succeed a coach who won two national championships in a three-year span.

Muschamp lured Charlie Weis from the Kansas City Chiefs to be his offensive coordinator and Dan Quinn from the Seattle Seahawks to be the defensive coordinator, giving Florida's staff a definite NFL flavor.

Vanderbilt fired Robbie Caldwell after one year as Bobby Johnson's replacement and hired James Franklin, Maryland's offensive coordinator. Franklin hired Bob Shoop as offensive coordinator and John Donovan as defensive coordinator.

LSU parted with offensive coordinator Gary Crowton and hired former Louisville head coach Steve Kragthorpe.

Mississippi State lost defensive coordinator Manny Diaz to Texas and hired Chris Wilson, who was co-defensive coordinator.

Ole Miss replaced offensive coordinator Dave Rader with David Lee, a former Arkansas assistant under Houston Nutt who was most recently with the Miami Dolphins. Lee is Nutt's third co-coordinator in three years.

Kentucky's Joker Phillips hired former Cincinnati coach Rick Minter as defensive coordinator to replace Steve Brown. Six programs did not change coordinators: Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Turning pro

For the third year in a row, the SEC lost 14 players early to the NFL draft, two of them Heisman Trophy winners and most of them skill-position players. The receiver and quarterback positions were hit hardest.

Among the wideouts leaving early were A.J. Green of Georgia, Julio Jones of Alabama, Darvin Adams of Auburn, Tori Gurley of South Carolina and Randall Cobb of Kentucky. Heisman winning quarterback Cam Newton of Auburn and Arkansas rifleman Ryan Mallett also departed. Alabama running back Mark Ingram, who won the 2009 Heisman, and LSU's Steve Ridley joined the play-for-pay ranks.

Two highly touted defensive linemen entered the draft: Nick Fairley of Auburn and Marcell Dareus of Alabama. Defensive back Will Hill of Florida, linebacker Justin Houston of Georgia and LSU cornerback Patrick Peterson turned pro. Florida's Janoris Jenkins didn't declare for the draft, but is probably headed to the supplemental pool follow-

FOUR-YEAR STANDINGS

Not a lot of motion between this year and last, though Florida held a dominant edge over Alabama when 2006 was factored in, and now 'Bama leads when the line moves up to 2007. Vanderbilt was trying its best to catch Mississippi State and climb out of the basement, but last year made certain the Commodores are team No. 12 for what appears to be the foreseeable future.

Team	Record	Pct.	All	Pct.	Ch	M	B	Comment
Alabama	25-7	.781	43-10	.811	1/2	2	4	Looks primed to stretch this lead out a bit.
Florida	24-8	.750	42-11	.792	1/2	2	4	Struggling to keep pace with the Tide.
LSU	20-12	.625	39-13	.750	1/1	2	4	Hard to argue with this track record of success.
Georgia	19-13	.593	34-17	.667	0/0	1	4	Was 2010 a glitch or sign of steady decline?
Auburn	18-14	.562	34-16	.680	1/1	1	3	Trend wasn't looking good before 2010.
Tennessee	16-16	.500	28-24	.538	0/1	0	3	Wow: More than a decade with no BCS game for Vols.
Arkansas	15-17	.468	30-21	.588	0/0	0	3	Thinking the BCS breakthrough is coming soon.
South Carolina	15-17	.468	29-22	.568	0/1	0	3	Should be Spurrier's third winning SEC season at SC.
Mississippi State	13-19	.406	26-24	.520	0/0	0	2	A long Dan Mullen stay could swing this upward.
Kentucky	10-22	.312	27-24	.529	0/0	0	4	Five straight bowls ... at Kentucky?
Ole Miss	10-22	.312	24-25	.489	0/0	0	2	This simply isn't going the right way.
Vanderbilt	7-25	.218	15-33	.312	0/0	0	1	New coach brings new hope? Ehh, why not?

NOTE: M=Major Bowl (BCS); B=Bowls

ing his dismissal from Florida following his second pot arrest of 2011.

Auburn and Alabama lost three each, LSU and Georgia two each.

Non-conference foes

In the first two weeks of the season, SEC teams will play several attractive non-conference games.

Georgia battles Boise State in the Chick-Fil-A Kickoff Classic in Atlanta (the Dawgs routed Boise State in the 2005 opener for both teams), while LSU opens against national championship runner-up Oregon at the Cowboys Stadium outside of Dallas.

Alabama will travel to Penn State; Vanderbilt hosts Connecticut, which played in the 2011 Fiesta Bowl. Ole Miss takes on Brigham Young and travels to Fresno State.

Other notable non-SEC games feature LSU at West Virginia, Auburn at Clemson, Clemson at South Carolina, Arkansas vs. Texas A&M at Cowboys Stadium, Florida State at Florida, Georgia at Georgia Tech, and Navy at South Carolina.

Some of the weaker teams that show up on SEC schedules are North Texas, Kent State, Georgia Southern, Missouri State, New Mexico, Utah State, Florida Atlantic, Samford, Furman, Coastal Carolina, Jacksonville State, Western Kentucky, Northwestern State, UT-Martin, The Citadel, Montana, Buffalo and Elon.

Draft success

When it came to the first round of the NFL Draft this year, the SEC was No. 1.

And No. 3 ... and No. 4 ... and No. 5 ... and No. 6.

The Carolina Panthers took Auburn quarterback Cam Newton with the first pick, but the run on SEC players had just begun. Alabama defensive tackle Marcell Dareus went third overall and Georgia receiver A.J. Green went fourth.

Then came LSU cornerback Patrick Peterson at No. 5 and Alabama wideout Julio Jones with the sixth pick.

The only non-SEC player in the first half-dozen picks was Texas A&M's outside linebacker Von Miller.

Going deeper, Auburn defensive tackle Nick Fairley went 13th, and Florida offensive lineman Mike Pouncey was 15th.

That's seven of the top 15 players from the SEC.

And the league wasn't done.

More first-rounders were Alabama offensive tackle James Carpenter (25), Alabama running back Mark Ingram (28) and Mississippi State offensive tackle Derek Sherrod (32).

The 10 first-rounders wasn't a league record, though. The SEC had 11 in 2007.

Three of the past five No. 1 overall picks has been an SEC quarterback, the others being JaMarcus Russell and Matthew Stafford.

SEC Fans Passionate

As testimony to the football passion of SEC fans, eight of the top 10 spring game crowds belonged to SEC schools.

Alabama attracted more than 92,000 and has averaged 88,000 over the past four years.

Auburn, the defending national champions, had more than 53,000 to rank fourth. Next were Florida (51,000), Georgia (43,177), Arkansas (42,000), Mississippi State (36,357), South Carolina (29,451) and Tennessee (29,000). Some of these are tickets sold. For example, Tennessee had closer to 20,000 in actual attendance.

CAM NEWTON

Photo by Chris Trotman/Getty Images

SEC coaches well paid

Last season, 25 football coaches made at least $2 million per season; the SEC had nine.

Alabama's Nick Saban topped the list at $6 million — counting guaranteed money and non-university funds.

Florida's Urban Meyer was fourth ($4 million) and LSU's Les Miles fifth ($3.9 million). Georgia's Mark Richt was ninth ($2.9 million) and Arkansas' Bobby Petrino 10th ($2.7 million).

Houston Nutt of Ole Miss was 13th ($2.5 million), Derek Dooley of Tennessee 19th ($2.1 million), Auburn's Gene Chizik 20th ($2.1 million) and South Carolina's Steve Spurrier 24th ($2 million). Spurrier got a raise to just more than $2.8 million for the next three years, but declined an extension.

LSU was trying to renegotiate Miles' buyout to a lesser amount. Had he been fired last season, LSU would have owed him $15 million (four times the amount of his total package).

Extra points

- The SEC has won five consecutive national championships, six in the past eight years and nine since the league expanded in 1992.
- The SEC has had two teams in BCS bowls for five years in a row.
- For the second consecutive year, Ole Miss could rely on a quarterback who was declared eligible immediately after transferring. Last year it was Jeremiah Masoli, formerly of Oregon. This year it's Barry Brunetti, who left West Virginia and was declared good to go by the NCAA in April.
- LSU is hoping QB Zach Mettenberger, dismissed from Georgia two years ago, will push Jordan Jefferson to become more consistent.
- Jefferson (20-7) is the winningest returning QB in the SEC. Stephen Garcia (17-13) of South Carolina is second. No other quarterback has double-digit wins. Only Mississippi State's Chris Relf (9-4), Florida's John Brantley (8-5) and Georgia's Aaron Murray (6-7) have more than five.
- Tennessee has lost 20 games since the start of the 2008 season, the worst three-year stretch in school history.

RATING **THE SEC**

QUARTERBACKS

1. GEORGIA
2. ARKANSAS
3. SOUTH CAROLINA
4. TENNESSEE
5. LSU
6. MISSISSIPPI STATE
7. FLORIDA
8. ALABAMA
9. KENTUCKY
10. AUBURN
11. OLE MISS
12. VANDERBILT

This is not a strong position. Only two returners have won at least 10 games, and only four returners passed for at least 2,000 yards last season, provided South Carolina's Stephen Garcia returns.

As a redshirt freshman, Georgia's Aaron Murray completed 61 percent of his passes for 3,049 yards and 24 touchdowns. He ranked fourth in the SEC and 14th in the nation in pass efficiency.

Arkansas' Tyler Wilson rarely played behind Ryan Mallett, but against Auburn, he passed for 332 yards and four touchdowns, an indication he will flourish in Bobby Petrino's system.

Garcia led Carolina to the East Division title, passing for 3,059 yards and 20 touchdowns. But he was suspended for the fifth time in the spring. Connor Shaw would start in Garcia's stead.

Tennessee's Tyler Bray set a freshman school record for passing yards (1,849) and surpassed 300 yards in four of his five starts, but he did it mostly against weak competition. LSU's Jordan Jefferson (1,861 total yards) finished strong last year and is the winningest active quarterback in the SEC at 20-7. Chris Relf put up solid numbers for Mississippi State last year — 1,789 yards passing, 713 rushing.

RUNNING BACKS

1. ARKANSAS
2. SOUTH CAROLINA
3. ALABAMA
4. AUBURN
5. GEORGIA
6. TENNESSEE
7. MISSISSIPPI STATE
8. FLORIDA
9. LSU
10. OLE MISS
11. KENTUCKY
12. VANDERBILT

Despite losing a former Heisman Trophy winner and a 1,000-yard rusher, the SEC is loaded at running back. Four returners had 1,000-yard seasons; five more had at least 700 yards.

Arkansas' Knile Davis is the SEC's leading returning rusher with 1,322 yards on an eye-popping 6.5 yards per carry. Ronnie Wingo and Dennis Johnson are gifted backups.

Marcus Lattimore was invaluable to South Carolina, evidenced by the way the offense bogged down when he was injured. He ran for 1,197 yards, had 412 receiving and scored 19 touchdowns — one off the SEC record for a freshman.

Some at Alabama think Trent Richardson (700 yards) was better than Mark Ingram, the 2009 Heisman winner. Richardson (26.4-yards average on kick returns) now has a chance to prove it.

Auburn has Michael Dyer (1,093 yards) and Onterio McCalebb (810) — good enough to be No. 1 on this list in other years. Georgia's Washaun Ealey ran for 811 yards but might take a back seat to heralded recruit Isaiah Crowell. Tennessee touts Tauren Poole (1,034). Vick Ballard had 968 yards and 20 touchdowns for Mississippi State.

Florida has two speedy backs — Chris Rainey and Jeff Demps (9.96 seconds in the 100). LSU's Spencer Ware had a terrific Cotton Bowl. Ole Miss' Brandon Bolden bolted for 976 yards.

RECEIVERS

1. ARKANSAS
2. SOUTH CAROLINA
3. TENNESSEE
4. GEORGIA
5. ALABAMA
6. FLORIDA
7. MISSISSIPPI STATE
8. LSU
9. AUBURN
10. KENTUCKY
11. OLE MISS
12. VANDERBILT

The SEC lost two stars in A.J. Green and Julio Jones, but this is another strong area for the league.

Arkansas is loaded. Greg Childs (46 catches) is a potential first-round pick. Joe Adams (50), Jarius Wright (42) and Coby Hamilton (32) are inviting targets in the Hogs' passer friendly attack. Three of them averaged more than 14 yards per catch.

South Carolina's Alshon Jeffery could be a top 10 NFL pick. He blossomed as a sophomore — 88 catches, 1,517 yards, nine touchdowns, 17.2 yards per catch. D.L. Moore and Ace Sanders, among others, are nice complements.

Tennessee has two of the most talented young receivers in the league in 26-foot long jumper Justin Hunter (16 for 415, 25.9 yards per catch) and Da'Rick Rogers (11 catches, 16 speed sweeps). Georgia's Tavarres King (27 catches) could be a 50-catch guy, along with tight end Orson Charles (26) who averaged 16.2 yards per catch.

Mississippi State has a stellar receiver in fleet Chad Bumphis, who had 44 catches for 634 yards in a run-oriented attack. LSU's top wideouts are Rueben Randle and Russell Sheppard. Alabama hopes Marquis Maze and Darius Hanks (70 combined catches) step up in Jones' absence.

OFFENSIVE LINE

1. ALABAMA
2. LSU
3. OLE MISS
4. SOUTH CAROLINA
5. MISSISSIPPI STATE
6. TENNESSEE
7. ARKANSAS
8. GEORGIA
9. FLORIDA
10. KENTUCKY
11. VANDERBILT
12. AUBURN

Alabama is one of six teams (LSU, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ole Miss and Vanderbilt are the others) that return at least four offensive line starters. Guard/tackle Barrett Jones and center William Vlachos are All-SEC caliber players; tackle D.J. Fluker isn't far behind and junior college All-American Aaron Douglas (a Tennessee transfer) was signed to help fill the void at left tackle.

LSU's line is anchored by center P.J. Lonergan, right tackle Alex Hurst and guard T-Bob Hebert. The Tigers were fourth in the league in rushing last year and produced a 1,000-yard back.

Ole Miss was one of three SEC teams to average more than 200 rushing yards per game, and Houston Nutt wants to put more emphasis on the run. All five starters return, led by tackles Bobby Massie and Bradley Sowell.

South Carolina has three starters back to help clear a path for Marcus Lattimore. Mississippi State lost its two best linemen, but three starters are back on the No. 2 rushing team in the league.

Tennessee was last in the SEC in rushing a year ago, but four starters return and the Vols have recruited well along the O-line in the last two years.

Auburn led the league in rushing by 70 yards per game, but lost four starters.

ALABAMA, GEORGIA LEAD DEFENSIVE HEADLINERS

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. SOUTH CAROLINA
2. ARKANSAS
3. GEORGIA
4. MISSISSIPPI STATE
5. LSU
6. ALABAMA
7. FLORIDA
8. TENNESSEE
9. OLE MISS
10. AUBURN
11. KENTUCKY
12. VANDERBILT

The SEC lost two high draft picks in Auburn's Nick Fairley and Alabama's Marcell Dareus. Nobody quite that talented remains.

South Carolina might have the premier defensive end in 6-7 Devin Taylor, fourth in the league with 7.5 sacks. Teammate Melvin Ingram was third with nine sacks as Carolina led the SEC with 41 and ranked third against the run.

Arkansas' Jake Bequette racked up seven sacks as the Hogs were second in that category with 37. Arkansas returns both defensive tackles — who are now fighting for their jobs — and should improve on last year's No. 10 ranking against the run.

Watch for Georgia's 6-6, 350-pound sophomore Kwame Geathers, who dominated during the spring. He joins two returning starters on what could be a much improved defense. Mississippi State has three starters back from the No. 4 run defense.

LSU has the best quartet of defense ends: Kendrick Adams, Lamar Edwards, Sam Montgomery and Barkevious Mingo. They helped LSU rank third in the SEC in total defense, fourth in sacks and sixth against the run.

Alabama, second in the league in run defense, likes nose tackle Josh Chapman. Ole Miss DE Kentrell Lockett was granted a sixth year of eligibility after coming off knee surgery.

LINEBACKERS

1. ALABAMA
2. FLORIDA
3. GEORGIA
4. ARKANSAS
5. KENTUCKY
6. LSU
7. TENNESSEE
8. VANDERBILT
9. AUBURN
10. SOUTH CAROLINA
11. OLE MISS
12. MISSISSIPPI STATE

The SEC has a number of quality linebackers, but only one team is loaded at the position — Alabama.

The Tide has two of the best in Dont'a Hightower and Courtney Upshaw. One NFL scout said Hightower, full speed after struggling through an ACL tear last year, would be the first SEC player taken in next year's draft and compared him to Rolando McClain. Upshaw could be a first-round pick. Sophomore C.J. Mosley is a budding star and Nico Johnson is a returning starter.

Florida has two quality linebackers in Jon Bostic and Jelani Jenkins. Georgia lost two solid linebackers, but watch for converted safety Alex Ogletree, who was a beast during the spring after gaining weight.

Arkansas' Jerry Franklin, a four-year starter, has recorded 194 tackles in the past two seasons combined. Kentucky's Danny Trevathan led the SEC in tackles (144) and was the only player to average double digits (11.1 per game). He was third in tackles for loss (16).

Vanderbilt's Chris Marve (SEC-high 121 stops as a sophomore) is a tackling machine who gets overlooked because his team isn't good. He should have another 100-tackle season.

LSU's Ryan Baker tied for the league lead in sacks (seven) among linebackers.

SECONDARY

1. ALABAMA
2. LSU
3. SOUTH CAROLINA
4. GEORGIA
5. MISSISSIPPI STATE
6. FLORIDA
7. TENNESSEE
8. VANDERBILT
9. KENTUCKY
10. ARKANSAS
11. AUBURN
12. OLE MISS

Alabama safety Robert Lester led the SEC with eight interceptions and spearheaded a unit that was first in the SEC and sixth in the nation in pass efficiency defense.

Safety Mark Barron, who led the team with seven picks in 2009, is a potential first-round draft pick. Corner Dre Kirkpatrick had 10 pass deflections. And Dee Milliner is a solid corner.

LSU led the SEC in passing yards allowed per game. The Tigers lost All-American corner Patrick Peterson, but even he says the secondary will be better. Morris Claiborne (five picks) is a great corner; Tyrann Mathieu led the league in fumbles caused; and recovered, and Tharold Simon has star potential.

South Carolina returns three starters from a unit that ranked 10th in the league a year ago but should be much improved, led by corner Stephon Gilmore.

Florida tied Alabama for most interceptions (22) and was 12th in the nation in pass defense efficiency. The Gators lost both safeties plus Janoris Jenkins, who was booted from the team following two marijuana arrests in a four-month period. Safety Matt Elam is an outstanding talent.

Georgia is led by cornerback Brandon Boykin. Mississippi State's top DB is safety Jonathan Banks. Vanderbilt's Casey Hayward was second in the SEC in interceptions (six).

SPECIAL TEAMS

1. GEORGIA
2. ARKANSAS
3. FLORIDA
4. ALABAMA
5. OLE MISS
6. KENTUCKY
7. LSU
8. SOUTH CAROLINA
9. TENNESSEE
10. AUBURN
11. MISSISSIPPI STATE
12. VANDERBILT

Georgia might once again have the nation's best punter-kicker combination in Drew Butler and Blair Walsh.

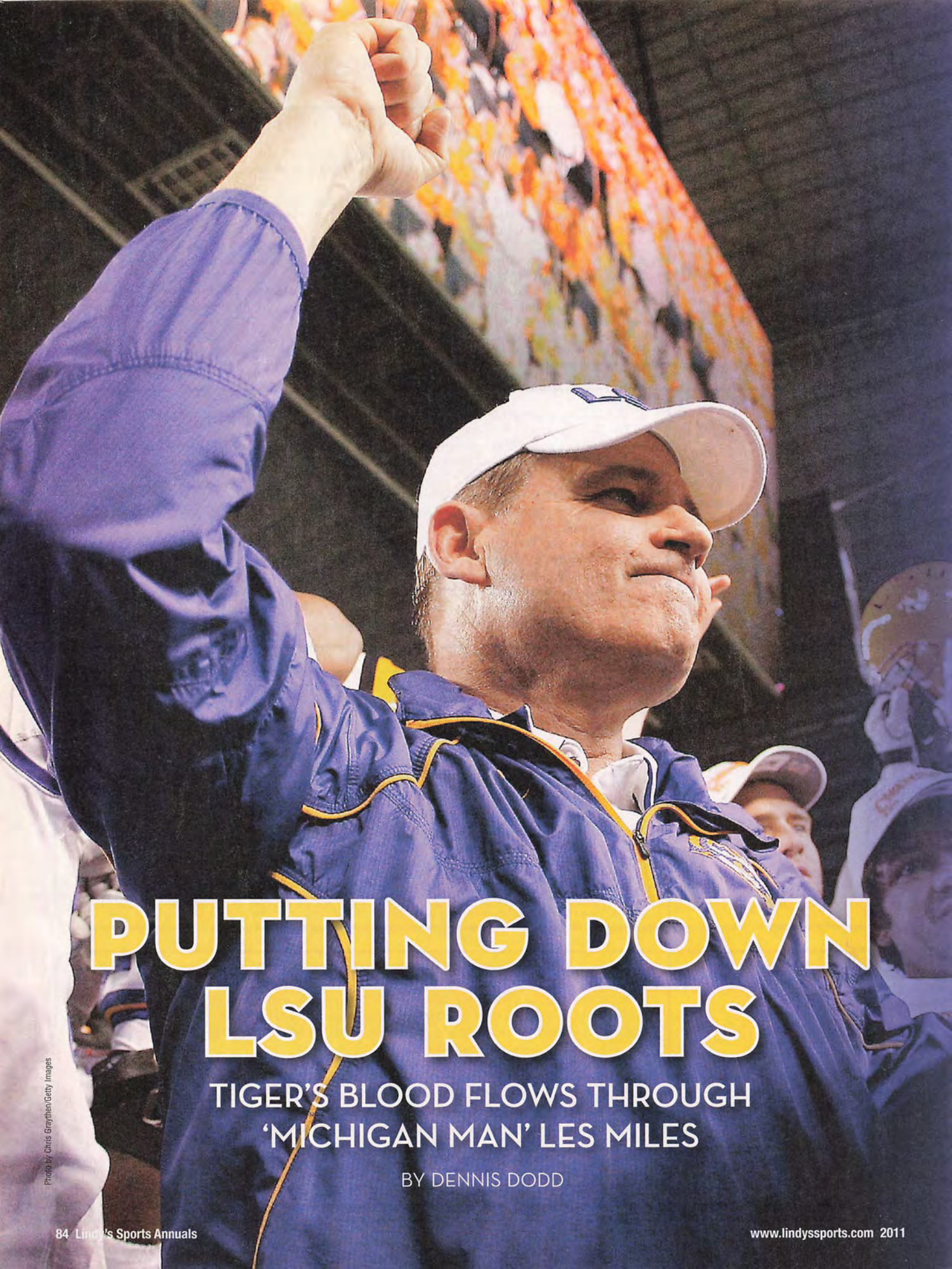
Butler averaged 44.5 yards per punt after leading the nation the year before (48.1). Walsh has made 40 of 45 field-goal attempts in the past two seasons. And Brandon Boykin averaged over 25 yards per kick return in the past two seasons, returning four for touchdowns. Georgia also led the league in kick coverage and was second in net punting.

At Arkansas, Zach Hocker had an outstanding freshman season, hitting 16 of 19 field-goal attempts, including 8 of 9 from outside 40 yards. Joe Adams was second in punt returns (15.6), and Dennis Johnson, who averaged 25.8 yards on kick returns in 2009, returns from injury.

Florida should be strong in the return game. Andre Dubose was second in kick returns (28.0), and kicker Caleb Sturgis (110 points in 2009) returns after an injury-plagued season.

Ole Miss' Tyler Campbell led the nation in punting (46.4), while LSU's Derek Helton (45.7) ranked in the Top 10. LSU will miss Patrick Peterson, who led the league in punt returns and kick returns — a rare double-double.

Alabama's Richardson is a threat returning kicks (26.4 yards per return and one touchdown).



PUTTING DOWN LSU ROOTS

TIGER'S BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH 'MICHIGAN MAN' LES MILES

BY DENNIS DODD

Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images

The door closed behind Les Miles and his Tigers last November, and it was wonderful.

Definitely for Miles after one of the biggest wins of his LSU career, but also for a couple of reporters who were swept up in the team party and found themselves behind those doors after a big win over Alabama.

I'm ecstatic to say I was one of them. Ecstatic because it was one of those rare times when the quotes weren't canned and the emotions weren't fake.

"We're tired," LSU linebacker Kelvin Sheppard said to his coach after an emotional 24-21 win over the Tide, "of all the bull—— they talk about you."

With that, Sheppard awarded a game ball to the coach whose hat always looks two sizes too small, but who seems intent on proving that his cajones are anything but standard size.

Call him Crazy Les.

"I am humbled," said the grass-eating, fourth-down-going, Michigan-loving enigma.

We didn't know it then, but Miles was on the verge of becoming a lifer at LSU. Oh, you didn't get the press release? Well, there wasn't one. It's one of those things that takes common sense and some deductive reasoning. Back then, we didn't know that Rich Rodriguez would be fired and Michigan would take a run at one of Bo's boys for the second time in three years.

Whether Michigan athletic director Dave Brandon wants to admit it or not, Brady Hoke wasn't his first choice. Brandon would have jumped at the chance to get Miles for the only reason that really matters anymore: He wins. He does it big. And because of that he competes for SEC and national championships.

The Tigers won 11 games last season in an "off" year. There is an abundance of talent in and around Baton Rouge that Miles hustles to get, and he always lands more than his share.

Why would he want to leave? Truth is, he won't. Not now. Not until he retires or they fire him, which, depending on the mood of the populace of his latest fourth-down gamble, could always happen.

But Michigan? No way. They've basically come calling twice. Les may be quirky, but the man is sharp. He's got it better in Baton Rouge.

"I've always kind of felt like ... I've needed to repay my alma mater," Miles said of Michigan.

"I don't know that I can't repay them by doing a good job here. I can tell you, I will never, ever not love that team and recognize that Coach Schembechler was absolutely the best thing that ever happened to me. (But) I couldn't forego this opportunity. I think loyalty is a strength and a weakness of mine. Damn, if I didn't want to stay."

And damn if his LSU-based critics don't know what they've got.

Miles is 62-17 in six seasons with two SEC West titles, an SEC championship and that national title in 2007. Before Nick Saban won an SEC title in 2001, LSU hadn't won an outright conference title since 1986. Maybe the best thing that can be said about Miles is that he didn't let the program slip after Saban left.

Those critics will tell you that the 2011 Tigers are a quarterback away from competing for a national championship. They won those 11 games last season with Jordan Jefferson, the 92nd-rated passer in the country. The NCAA only ranks 100.

His inconsistency was maddening. But Jefferson was good enough to beat Alabama in that game where the sidebar was Miles being caught on camera eating grass.

"Sometimes you don't have any choice but to hear (the criticism)," said Jefferson, a senior.

He is coming off an encouraging Cotton Bowl, where he threw for three touchdowns and ran for another against Texas A&M. Up to that point, most damning was the feeling that perhaps Jefferson wasn't being trusted. In eight of the Tigers' 13 games in 2010, he threw less than 18 times. At times it almost seemed that LSU was winning despite him.

"It may have been trust issues," Jefferson theorized.

"I think he practiced to practice at times," Miles said. "He's much different than that now."

Georgia transfer Zach "The Mett-siah" Mettenberger has arrived at least in a position to push Jefferson. Backup Jarrett Lee is capable but doesn't have explosive tools in the form of Mettenberger's arm or Jefferson's legs.

Maybe Jefferson has the job because he is best at handling all the crap. If an ill-timed throw doesn't rattle him, a well-aimed Twitter bomb certainly won't. The man is proud that his best play last year might have been a lead block on a fourth-and-1 reverse against Alabama.

"That just let me know the play was somewhat dependent on me," Jefferson said.

They're on stage again — Les, JJ, the Tigers — and they're good enough to win a national championship.

Not many programs can lose defenders the quality of Sheppard, Patrick Peterson and Drake Nevis and still start in the top five. There's a new offensive coordinator in Steve Kragthorpe. There won't be any BCS questions if the Tigers win them all. The schedule includes the opener against Oregon and a trip to Tuscaloosa to take on the Tide and its statuesque former LSU coach.

Once again, we're all mere passengers on a purple-and-gold crazy train. If you got a problem, Miles understands. It doesn't mean he agrees; it just means he understands.

"I'll take the hit," Miles said. "Really, that's my job. I understand that. If it allows my assistant coaches and players to play, I'll suffer the consequence year in, year out."

Just one favor, Les. Please leave the door open.

Dennis Dodd is a senior writer for CBSSports.com covering national college football.

THE MILES FILE

The head coaching career of LSU's Les Miles:

YEAR	SCHOOL	RECORD
2001	Oklahoma State	4-7
2002	Oklahoma State	8-5
2003	Oklahoma State	9-4
2004	Oklahoma State	7-5
2005	LSU	11-2
2006	LSU	11-2
2007	LSU	12-2
2008	LSU	8-5
2009	LSU	9-4
2010	LSU	11-2

Total at Oklahoma State: 28-21, 4 years
Total at LSU: 62-17, 6 years
Overall: 90-38, 10 years

Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images

FAMILY PLANNING

A MISSOURI BUS COMPANY MADE IT EASY FOR CHARLIE WEIS TO BECOME FLORIDA'S NEW OC

By Dennis Dodd

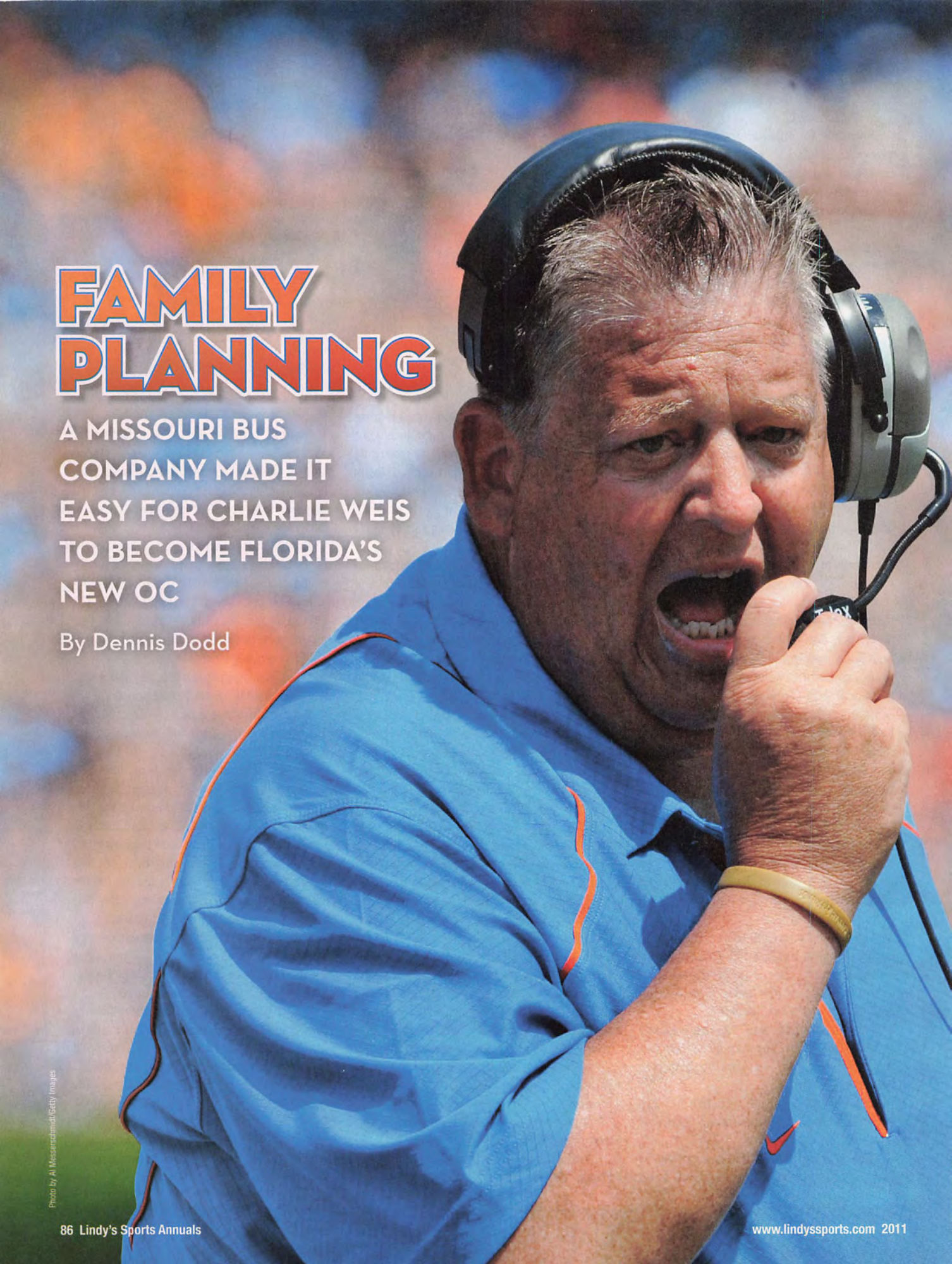


Photo by Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images

You saw the transaction and had to wonder about the story behind the story: Charlie Weis to ... Florida?

This was not a demotion back to college or him bailing on the equally irascible Todd Haley, his Kansas City Chiefs' boss. Weis wants to be a Gator, but not for the money, prestige or power.

Not this time.

"When you finally hear all the moving parts," Florida's new offensive coordinator said, "you say, 'Maybe this guy actually moved because of his family.'"

You can blame the bus company in Parkville, Mo. — the small, pastoral town near the Missouri River the Weises called home during their year with the Chiefs.

Hannah, their 15-year-old daughter with special needs, always has been at the center of their lives. Last summer, Maura and Charlie were convinced to let Hannah ride the bus home from camp. There was a bit of concern, but the parents were assured their daughter would be dropped off at 12:27 p.m.

By 3 p.m., she hadn't arrived.

"We're out riding around town looking for her," Weis said. "We're about ready to call the cops. So I'm pissed. I go in (to the school) the next day."

There were apologies and assurances all around. Then it happened again later in the summer as the Chiefs were breaking camp, moving from St. Joseph, Mo., back to Kansas City. School for Hannah had started. She was supposed to be home at 2:45 p.m. At 5 p.m., there was still no Hannah.

"So we *did* call the cops," Weis said.

"There was no explanation. I called the school and said, 'I want everyone there tomorrow morning, 9 o'clock. This is two instances.' My wife wanted to move back right then. It was already over for her. Forget about anything that happened after that."

Both times, the bus driver had failed to alert Hannah of her stop, Weis said. Both times, she basically rode to the end of the route while her parents were freaking out back home. At that point, Kansas City was dead to Maura. Charlie felt the same way, even as his contributions helped the Chiefs win the AFC West and quarterback Matt Cassel go to the Pro Bowl.

It was decided that the family wasn't going to be apart like this, with son Charlie Jr. headed off to college and Hannah headed back to the family's other home near South Bend. The Weis family has land there that is the center of "Hannah and Friends," a non-profit organization they founded to help special-needs children.

No matter how much his dad convinced him otherwise, Charlie Jr. wanted to be a coach. He had met Texas coach Mack Brown and saw a future, eager to work his way up the staff ladder. Only when defensive coordinator Will Muschamp left the Longhorns to take the head coaching job at Florida did it all fall together.

As Weis was talking to Muschamp about becoming the Gators' coordinator, he inquired about an opportunity for his son.

It was a package deal that made total sense. This was a way for the family to stay together. One career transitioning, the other starting.

It was decided that Maura and Hannah would spend part of the year in the horse country of nearby Ocala. Maura loves horses. In his mid-50s, Weis gave up the coaching climb for an opportunity to be with his son. Charlie Jr. will start as a Florida manager, his dad says. For at least the next four years, it seems they will all be together.

"A lot of times as you're going up the ladder and you're making more and more, you realize, at a point, is the money really worth it?" Weis said. "As you're watching your wife and your son take every body-blow that you take. ... You taking them is one thing. Them taking them is another."

Charlie long ago had a chunk taken out of his ego. After some early success, the Notre Dame thing ultimately didn't work. Florida and the SEC is a different place, but he comes well armed.

Weis has always been able to call plays, recruit players and develop quarterbacks. And if you're wondering, yes, he wants to be back on the road rounding up players for the Gators.

When asked about last year's assertion in Kansas City that he was hired to "fix the quarterback," he downplays it. Cassel, in a make-or-break year for his career, became incredibly efficient under Weis, registering 27 touchdowns against seven interceptions.

Weis soaks up the credit only to a point, saying Cassel and "Tommy" (Brady) made their own careers. John Brantley is the next fix. For three years, Brantley sat behind Tim Tebow, expected to slide into position seamlessly. When Brantley got the chance in 2010, the world found out this drop-back passer couldn't function in Urban Meyer's spread option.

"Without saying anything incriminating about the last staff, he really didn't fit what they were doing," Weis said.

Muschamp's decision to run a pro-style offense and Weis' arrival to run it might have kept Brantley from transferring. It doesn't matter to Weis. He didn't hesitate when it came to meeting with the quarterback and his parents.

"Where are you going to go?" he said to the rising fifth-year senior.

He stayed and now will team with Weis in hopes of meeting the always-high expectations of Gator fans.

That said, for the second successive year — and perhaps for the rest of his career — Weis is not running the show. That's OK, as long as everyone understands what he does. The coach who is reportedly Florida's highest paid assistant ever ($2.5 million over three years) took a monstrous pay cut from the NFL.

That's one indicator.

"I didn't come here with the agenda of, 'Let's be Gus Malzahn. Let's go get hot,' Weis said of Auburn's offensive coordinator.

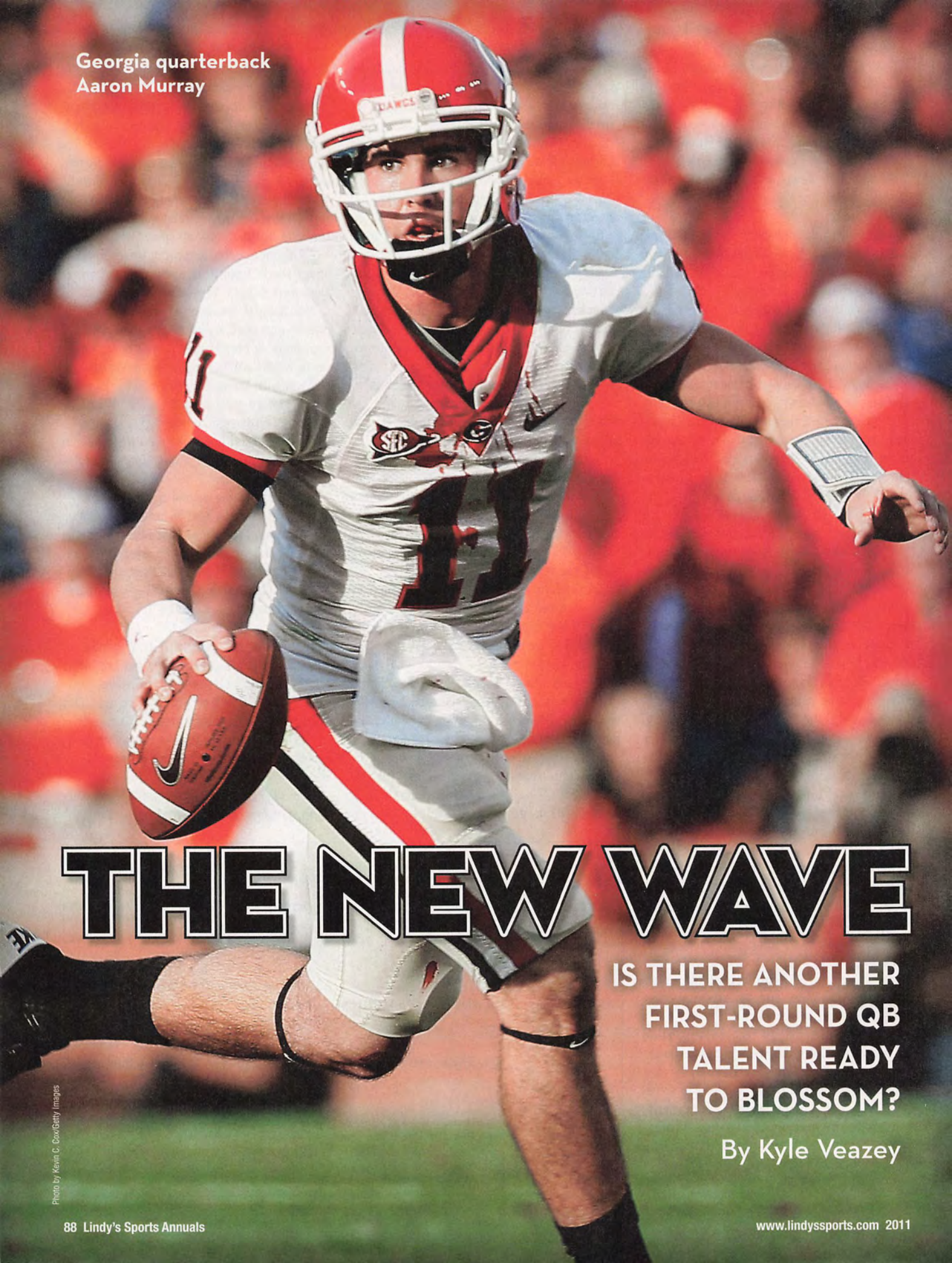
"If I just wanted to get into the mix (for a new job), I'd probably stay in Kansas City. I had the opportunity to take care of my family in a different way than most people."

Dennis Dodd is a senior writer for CBSSports.com covering national college football.

THE WEIS FILE

The coaching bio of Florida offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Charlie Weis:

YEAR	SCHOOL	POSITION
1979	Boonton H.S. (NJ)	Assistant
1980-84	Morristown H.S. (NJ)	Assistant
1985-88	South Carolina	Grad Assistant/volunteer coach/ Asst. Recruiting Coordinator
1989	Franklin Township H.S. (NJ)	Head Coach
1990-92	New York Giants	Defensive Asst./Asst. Special Teams (1990)/RB coach (1991-92)
1993-96	New England Patriots	Tight Ends (1993-94)/Running Backs (1995)/Receivers (1996)
1997-99	New York Jets	Wide Receivers (1997)/Offensive Coordinator (1998-99)
2000-04	New England Patriots	Offensive Coordinator
2005-09	Notre Dame	Head Coach
2010	Kansas City Chiefs	Offensive Coordinator



Georgia quarterback Aaron Murray

THE NEW WAVE

IS THERE ANOTHER FIRST-ROUND QB TALENT READY TO BLOSSOM?

By Kyle Veazey

Photo by Kevin C. Cox/Getty Images

In a memorable 2010 in the Southeastern Conference, few players were as memorable as the quarterbacks.

Cam Newton led Auburn to a national title, won the Heisman and was in the news for various other reasons, too. Greg McElroy was an SEC star for leading Alabama to the national title a year earlier. And who could look past Ryan Mallett, the lanky Razorback who essentially re-wrote Arkansas' offensive record book?

The position takes a stark turn in many SEC locales in 2011.

The word "quarterback" is accompanied with a healthy amount of uncertainty and intrigue — and even some drama with Steve Spurrier's South Carolina bunch. Which isn't that unusual.

In addition to the league having a number of young returning starters, five SEC teams will enter 2011 with quarterbacks taking the full-time reins for the first time. That could be six thanks to the drama that unfolded in the spring with Stephen Garcia at South Carolina. He was suspended from the program for the fifth time. Yet when the Gamecocks released a depth chart after spring practice, Garcia was still listed as co-starter.

If the Gamecocks don't have Garcia, they'll turn to sophomore Connor Shaw, who attempted 33 passes last season as the No. 2 to Garcia.

Tyler Wilson takes over for Mallett at Arkansas, and this isn't anything completely new for him. When Mallett was injured in the middle of the Razorbacks' season last year, Wilson stepped in and completed 66.7 percent of his passes — slightly more than Mallett — and threw for four touchdowns.

Coach Bobby Petrino isn't just going to hand the job to Wilson, though, and he framed his quarterback race after spring practice as open.

"We got to know what their strengths are, and what they need to work on," Petrino said.

Ole Miss doesn't have the task of replacing a long-time, record-breaking starter, but it still has an incredibly inexperienced group vying to replace single-year starter Jeremiah Masoli. The Rebels got a late-April boost when the NCAA lifted its year-in-residence requirement for West Virginia transfer Barry Brunetti.

Coach Houston Nutt said Randall Mackey, a junior college transfer who redshirted last year behind Masoli, ended the spring slightly ahead. But the race will be close to wide open when August begins. And regardless of the eventual winner, Nutt — and new quarterbacks coach and offensive coordinator David Lee — likes the raw material he's been given.

"I feel real good about these three that we have," Nutt said. "Probably the best three that we've had at one time on campus."

Alabama has to find a replacement for McElroy, who led the Crimson Tide to the national title in the 2009 season. The Crimson Tide closed spring with a neck-and-neck race between freshman Phillip Sims and sophomore AJ McCarron. But the close nature of the race isn't because of mediocrity, coach Nick Saban said.

Saban thinks the real factor that determines which quarterback is best is "when the fur flies," hinting that only game action will help determine McElroy's successor. A two-quarterback system could be in the works when Kent State visits on Sept. 3.

"Until somebody separates, I have no problem doing that," Saban said. "I really don't."

McCarron has the experience edge, having attempted 48 passes in 2010 as McElroy's backup.

There might just be a little pressure on the eventual starter at Auburn; last year's guy only won the Heisman Trophy and led the Tigers to the national title. Barrett Trotter and Clint Moseley battled in the spring, with no clear-cut winner.

As Newton's backup last year, Trotter attempted a scant nine passes.

Even at some of the schools with returning quarterbacks, there are question marks.

Tennessee's Tyler Bray took hold of the starting job after a strong finish to his freshman season in coach Derek Dooley's first year. But he didn't do himself many favors in the spring game, missing his first eight passes and finishing five of 30 on a windy day. Still, the Vols prefer to look at his body of work.

"I've improved a lot," Bray said. "The (inaccuracy) is going to happen every once in a while, but my decisions, I felt, were good. I'm making better decisions."

Kentucky will be breaking in a new quarterback, but he's not *that* new. Morgan Newton started the Wildcats' bowl game last year, going 21 of 36 for 211 yards. And he played quite a bit in 2009.

At Mississippi State, coach Dan Mullen won nine games last year with Chris Relf as the starting quarterback. He's back, but Mullen still frames his quarterback race as wide open, with Dylan Favre and Tyler Russell providing the pressure. Mullen probably is saying that as motivation more than anything else. Relf could be one of the league's top quarterbacks this fall.

Florida returns John Brantley, but the difference is in the coaching, not the personnel. With new head coach Will Muschamp in town, Brantley's position coach is Charlie Weis, a pro-style guy who has worked with some fine quarterbacks, including the one he calls "Tommy" — Tom Brady. Brantley's spring results suggest a wait-and-see approach.

LSU returns Jordan Jefferson, but prized junior college transfer Zack Mettenberger is in hot pursuit and should be a viable option if Jefferson sputters.

But it's not all drama across the South, and that's welcome news to coaches like Georgia's Mark Richt. On the proverbial hot seat in Athens, he has stability in Aaron Murray.

Finally, a safe QB outpost in the SEC.

"We are very thankful to have a guy like Murray at quarterback," Richt sad.

"The minute he stepped on campus, he began preparing to be the starting quarterback at the University of Georgia. He watches film, studies fundamentals and does whatever it takes to be successful. There isn't one guy on our team who would say that Aaron isn't putting in the time to take this team to the top."

CONFERENCE OF QUARTERBACKS

The SEC has produced one first-round quarterback in eight of the past nine drafts, including No. 1 picks Eli Manning, JaMarcus Russell, Matthew Stafford and Cam Newton.

Year	Player, school	Overall pick
2011	Cam Newton, Auburn	No. 1
2010	Tim Tebow, Florida	No. 25
2009	Matthew Stafford, Georgia	No. 1
2007	JaMarcus Russell, LSU	No. 1
2006	Jay Cutler, Vanderbilt	No. 11
2005	Jason Campbell, Auburn	No. 25
2004	Eli Manning, Ole Miss	No. 1
2003	Rex Grossman, Florida	No. 22

ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

For more coverage of the Crimson Tide, visit alabama.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim McElwain | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kirby Smart** | **STADIUM: Bryant-Denny: 101,821**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
10-3, 5-3 SEC (4th, West)

COACH:
Nick Saban — At Alabama: 43-11, 4 years; overall: 134-53-1, 15 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
18; 7 offense, 9 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Trent Richardson, C William Vlachos, WR Marquis Maze, OG Barrett Jones, LB Dont'a Hightower, SS Mark Barron, DE Damion Square, LB Courtney Upshaw, DB Robert Lester

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Alabama is in great shape defensively with a strong set of linebackers and plenty of experience in the line and secondary, especially if Barron is healthy. Offensively, Alabama has a good line, plus outstanding backs and receivers. The special teams should be special.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Left tackle is a concern ... and who will fill the shoes of departed quarterback Greg McElroy and wide receiver Julio Jones? AJ McCarron and Phillip Sims will battle for the QB job. With the talent surrounding him, whoever is named the starter should have plenty of help.

KEY LOSSSES:
DE Marcell Dareus, RB Mark Ingram, QB Greg McElroy, WR Julio Jones, LT James Carpenter, TE Preston Dial

OVERVIEW:
Alabama is in position again to battle for the SEC West championship and make another run at the BCS title. The Crimson Tide has a veteran defense and experienced talent everywhere on offense except at quarterback. The SEC slate features home games against SEC rivals Arkansas, Tennessee and LSU, but road trips to Florida, Mississippi State and Auburn will be challenges.

Reloaded Tide Sets Sights on SEC, BCS Crowns

How can a team lose its top three offensive playmakers and still start the next season ranked as one of the favorites to reach the BCS National Championship Game?

It helps when you are from the Southeastern Conference, home of the past five national champions. It also helps when you continually rank in the top five in the nation in recruiting. There is talent — not necessarily experienced talent — but certainly talent thanks to stellar recruiting classes.

And it doesn't hurt to have Nick Saban as your coach.

Despite the losses of tailback Mark Ingram, quarterback Greg McElroy and receiver Julio Jones, Alabama will open the 2011 season in the unique position as one of two favorites to win the SEC West, the power side of the SEC the past two seasons — even after the Tide's fourth-place finish in the division last season.

Alabama is able to plug in talented replacements for its departed playmakers with experienced players who have been serving as backups just waiting for their chance to shine. Ingram, who won the Heisman Trophy in 2009, will step aside for Trent Richardson, who has scored 14 touchdowns in spot duty.

With Jones taking his talents to the NFL, a host of receivers who have made big plays will step in to pick up the slack. While they might lack the speed and size of Jones, they still have big-time potential.

The biggest question is this: How will AJ McCarron or Phillip Sims replace McElroy's near flawless execution of the offense and his leadership skills?

"We got a chance to look at things (in the spring) that we typically do not see in our own offense or our own defense that we will have to play against next year," Saban said.

"The team is able to get the basic information they need, so when the time comes (in the fall), we will not be starting from scratch. We are still trying to focus on fundamental improvement and getting knowledge to the players. The effort, toughness and intangibles are things we really need to continue to work on, and I think we have made some progress there.

"We have a little more maturity on this team, but we also have a lot of young guys that need to continue to step up," Saban said.

OFFENSE

Mark Ingram, Julio Jones and Greg McElroy are taking a lot of offense with them: 998 rushing yards and 16 rushing touchdowns, 99 receptions and eight touchdown catches, and 20 passing touchdowns.

So who is going to step up for the Tide offense?

It's not as if there is a dearth of talent and experience; it's just there are not as many experienced playmakers as Saban has gotten used to in the past three seasons.

The offense will revolve around junior tailback Trent Richardson, who has rushed for a combined 1,451 yards and 14 touchdowns while backing up Ingram the past two seasons. Richardson, a slashing runner with great speed, was the leading rusher and receiver in the spring game.

There are sure-handed receivers in Marquis Maze and Darius Hanks. The offensive line is solid, and the special teams are made up of returning veterans, as veteran as sophomores can be.

At quarterback, McElroy's leadership and his ability to run the offense will be missed.

Dont'a Hightower
Photo by RD Moore

The top two candidates going into the spring were sophomore AJ McCarron and redshirt freshman Phillip Sims, in that order. Neither separated from the other in spring drills or in the spring game. If anything, the two might even be closer heading into the fall.

Both quarterbacks have strong arms and a good grasp on the offense. Redshirt freshman Blake Sims (no relation to Phillip) and early enrolle Phillip Ely also could figure into the picture.

The offensive line, with four returning starters, should be a strength for Alabama.

Center William Vlachos has started 27 consecutive games and is considered one of the nation's best. Chance Warmack started every game at left guard last season, and Barrett Jones started 11 games at right guard, although in the spring game he played left tackle and the move could be permanent in the fall.

D.J. Fluker, who started nine games last season, will be the right tackle. Aaron Douglas, who was a freshman All-American at Tennessee before transferring to Western Arizona, could be in line to play left tackle if Jones moves back to guard.

Anthony Steen, who started two games when Jones was injured last season, could be in line as a starting guard should Jones' move become permanent. Arie Kouandjio, John Michael Boswell and Kellen Williams should see plenty of action in relief roles.

The line will work with a new assistant coach, Jeff Stoutland, who moved to Alabama after four years at Miami as offensive line coach.

DEFENSE

Tough, hard-nosed defense has been a tradition at Alabama, from Lee Roy Jordan in the early 1960s to Cornelius Bennett, DeMeco Ryans, Rolando McClain, Terrence Cody and Marcell Dareus in recent times.

This year should be no different. Saban loves defense as much as defensive coordinator Kirby Smart, and this year's defense should be easy to love. The Crimson Tide return nine starters, with the linebackers and secondary leading the way. If there is a question on defense, it is the development of the line, but Saban believes the unit made great strides in spring drills.

"Defensively, I think that we have made a lot of progress and a lot less mental errors," Saban said.

"I think we also made a tremendous amount of progress with the defensive line. Damion Square had a good spring. Ed Stinson has gotten better. The junior college guys have made a significant amount of improvement, learning the system and getting more comfortable trying to play things the way we want

Barrett Jones
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	AJ McCarron	So.	Has thrown three touchdowns in limited action.	Phillip Sims, Fr.
RB	Trent Richardson	Jr.	Should be a 2011 star; gained 700 yards as backup.	Eddie Lacy, So.
WR	Darius Hanks*	Sr.	Made 32 catches for 456 yards and three TDs in '10.	Kenny Bell, So.
WR	Marquis Maze*	Sr.	Has explosive speed; 80 career catches.	Kevin Norwood, So.
H	Brad Smelley	Sr.	Has played in 35 games; 16 career receptions.	DeAndrew White, Fr
TE	Michael Williams*	Jr.	Had eight catches for 100 yards and one TD last year.	Brian Vogler, Fr.
LT	Barrett Jones*	Jr.	All-SEC and All-America as guard; is he LT this year?	Aaron Douglas, Jr.
LG	Chance Warmack*	Jr.	Experienced player had 13 starts last season.	John Michael Boswell, Sr.
C	William Vlachos*	Sr.	NFL prospect is one of top centers in country.	Kellen Williams, So.
RG	Anthony Steen	So.	Already is one of the team's strongest players.	Barrett Jones, Jr. *
RT	D.J. Fluker*	So.	Big-time potential; earned freshman All-SEC honors.	Alfred McCullough, Sr.
K	Jeremy Shelley*	Jr.	Converted 12 of 16 FGs; 50 of 51 PATs in 2011.	Cade Foster, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ed Stinson	So.	Moved from linebacker to end at midseason.	Undra Billingsley, Jr.
NG	Josh Chapman*	Sr.	Has made 14 starts and has 65 career tackles.	Jesse Williams, Jr.
DE	Damion Square*	Jr.	Came up with 27 tackles last year, seven for loss.	Quinton Dial, Jr.
LB	Jerrell Harris	Sr.	Versatile player has outstanding speed.	Alex Watkins, Sr.
LB	Nico Johnson*	Jr.	Tied for ninth on team tackles in 2010.	C.J. Mosley, So.
LB	Dont'a Hightower*	Jr.	Should have monster season; 149 career tackles.	Chris Jordan, Sr.
LB	Courtney Upshaw*	Sr.	Another All-American candidate at LB for Bama.	Ed Stinson, So.
CB	Dre Kirkpatrick*	Jr.	Has 60 tackles in 25 games for the Tide.	Phelon Jones, Sr.
CB	Dee Milliner*	So.	Won the starting job as true freshman.	DeQuan Menzie, Sr.
SS	Mark Barron*	Sr.	First-team All-American by FWAA.	Will Lowery, Jr.
FS	Robert Lester*	Jr.	Led the SEC with eight interceptions.	Nick Perry, So.
P	Cody Mandell*	So.	Invited walk-on averaged 39.2 yards per punt in 2010.	Jay Williams, Fr.

*Returning Starter

CRIMSON TIDE RECRUITING 2011 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Hasean Clinton-Dix
Although the Tide returns a good bit of skill and experience at safety, Clinton-Dix is an exceptional five-star talent who has the ability to get on the field next season and make an impact, possibly as a fifth defensive back. He not only can hit, but has excellent cover skills.

Demetrius Hart
An explosive and compact back, Hart is a threat to score any time he touches the ball. An early enrollee, Hart plays bigger than most 5-8 backs, largely because he has a thick upper body and stout base. He also has great vision. Hart could provide an occasional spell for starting tailback Trent Richardson.

Cyrus Kouandjio
Kouandjio arguably was the best offensive lineman to emerge from the 2011 class. An enormous tackle, he already has an SEC-ready body. But like most young linemen, he'll need plenty of seasoning. Still, Kouandjio is talented enough to hit the field this fall.

THE SLEEPER

Phillip Ely
Ely almost certainly will redshirt this fall, and finding the field his first few seasons in Tuscaloosa won't be easy. But he's a solid, if not spectacular quarterback who has a track record for winning. Alabama requires its quarterbacks to manage games. That he can do.

Committments	22
Average Stars	3.91
✪✪✪✪✪	3
✪✪✪✪✪	14
✪✪✪✪✪	5
✪✪✪✪✪	0
Total Stars	86
National Rank: 1	SEC: 1

2012 NEEDS: There are several. Although the Tide landed some solid linebackers in February, that remains an area of need. Alabama is loaded at that position in 2011, but two of its projected starters are seniors and junior Dont'a Hightower is the type of talent who could leave school early if he produces another solid season. The Tide also needs defensive backs and wide receivers, where several starters will depart after the 2011 season. Alabama lost some key battles for defensive backs in recent years making this a crucial cycle.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Brent Calloway	LB	6-1	210	✪✪✪✪	Russellville, AL	Russellville

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 5 outside linebacker...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Selected to compete in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Chose Alabama over Auburn.

Hasean Clinton-Dix	DB	6-2	190	✪✪✪✪✪	Orlando, FL	Dr. Phillips

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 1 safety...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Chose Alabama over Florida, Florida State, USC, Ohio State and Notre Dame.

Trey DePriest	LB	6-2	231	✪✪✪✪	Springfield, OH	Springfield

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 7 outside linebacker...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game... Recorded 117 tackles and nine sacks as a senior.

Quinton Dial	DE	6-6	315	✪✪✪✪	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.

Rated as the nation's No. 15 junior college prospect by Rivals.com...Enrolled at Alabama in January.

Xzavier Dickson	DE	6-3	238	✪✪✪✪	Griffin, GA	Griffin

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 4 weakside defensive end...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game... Recorded 19 sacks as a senior.

Aaron Douglas	OL	6-6	280	✪✪✪✪	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.

Rated as the nation's No. 10 junior college prospect by Rivals.com...Earned Freshman All-America honors at Tennessee in 2009.

Phillip Ely	QB	6-1	186	✪✪✪	Tampa, FL	Plant

Rated as the No. 71 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 20 pro-style quarterback...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Threw for 2,731 yards and 26 touchdowns as a senior.

Malcolm Faciane	TE	6-6	265	✪✪✪✪	Picayune, MS	Picayune

Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 tight end...Chose Alabama over Ole Miss and Southern Miss.

LaMichael Fanning	DT	6-6	285	✪✪✪✪	Hamilton, GA	Harris County

Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 25 defensive tackle.

Demetrius Hart	RB	5-8	190	✪✪✪✪✪	Orlando, FL	Dr. Phillips

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 1 all-purpose back...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Rushed for 2,224 yards as a senior.

Chris Jones	DB	6-0	185	✪✪✪✪	Adamsville, AL	Minor

Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 18 safety...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.

Ryan Kelly	OL	6-5	270	✪✪✪	West Chester, OH	Lakota West

Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 6 center...Suffered ACL injury as a senior...Selected to participate in Under Armour All-American Game.

Cyrus Kouandjio	OL	6-7	322	✪✪✪✪✪	Hyattsville, MD	DeMatha

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Maryland...Rated as the nation's No. 1 offensive tackle...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Chose Alabama over Auburn.

Isaac Luatua	OL	6-2	299	✪✪✪	La Mirada, CA	La Mirada

Rated as the No. 37 prospect in California by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 10 center...Selected to participate in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.

Jeoffrey Pagan	DE	6-4	272	✪✪✪✪	Asheville, NC	Asheville

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in North Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 4 strongside defensive end...Selected to participate in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Chose Alabama over Clemson and Florida.

D.J. Pettway	DE	6-3	255	✪✪✪✪	Pensacola, FL	Catholic

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 13 strongside defensive end...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.

Marvin Shinn	WR	6-3	177	✪✪✪✪	Prichard, AL	Vigor

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 10 wide receiver...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.

Vinnie Sunseri	LB	5-11	193	✪✪✪	Tuscaloosa, AL	Northridge

Rated as the No. 26 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Son of Alabama linebacker coach Sal Sunseri...Enrolled at Alabama in January.

Bradley Sylve	WR	5-11	175	✪✪✪✪	Port Sulphur, LA	South Plaquemines

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 14 wide receiver... Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.

Jabriel Washington	ATH	5-11	165	✪✪✪	Jackson, TN	Trinity Christian Academy

Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 20 athlete...Selected to compete in the Team USA vs. The World Game.

Jesse Williams	DT	6-4	330	✪✪✪✪	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.

Rated as the nation's No. 2 junior college prospect by Rivals.com...Originally signed with Hawaii in 2008...Enrolled at Alabama in January.

Danny Woodson	WR	6-2	200	✪✪✪✪	Mobile, AL	LeFlore

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 25 wide receiver... Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

CRIMSON TIDE SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
19	Jonathan Atchison	LB	6-3	240	So.	Atlanta, GA
31	John Baites	TE	6-1	231	Sr.	Hendersonville, TN
4	Mark Barron	DB	6-2	218	Sr.	Mobile
7	Kenny Bell	WR	6-1	175	So.	Rayville, LA
86	Undra Billingsley	DL	6-2	288	Jr.	Birmingham
69	David Blalock	OL	6-5	261	Sr.	Charlotte, NC
93	Chris Bonds	DL	6-4	269	So.	Columbia, SC
67	John Michael Boswell	OL	6-5	300	Sr.	Northport
88	Michael Bowman	WR	6-4	225	So.	Rossville, GA
81	Hardie Buck	WR	5-9	190	Jr.	Birmingham
34	Hunter Bush	DB	5-11	195	Jr.	Wetumpka
20	Nate Carlson	TE	6-4	236	Jr.	Birmingham
5	Ronald Carswell	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	Macon, GA
25	Caleb Castille	DB	5-11	170	Fr.	Birmingham
99	Josh Chapman	DL	6-1	310	Sr.	Hoover
33	Trey Depriest	LB	6-2	242	Fr.	Springfield, OH
90	Quinton Dial	DL	6-6	294	Jr.	Pinson
77	Aaron Douglas	OL	6-7	275	Jr.	Maryville, TN
40	DeMarcus DuBose	LB	6-1	240	Sr.	Montgomery
12	Phillip Ely	QB	6-1	187	Fr.	Tampa, FL
76	D.J. Fluker	OL	6-6	335	So.	Foley
43	Cade Foster	PK	6-1	216	So.	Southlake, TX
45	Jalston Fowler	RB	6-1	246	So.	Mobile
10	John Fulton	DB	6-0	187	So.	Manning, SC
58	Nick Gentry	DL	6-1	284	Sr.	Prattville
11	Brandon Gibson	WR	6-2	194	Sr.	Mobile
6	Demetrius Goode	RB	5-9	205	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
25	Corey Grant	RB	5-9	194	Fr.	Opelika
23	Robby Green	DB	6-0	184	Sr.	New Orleans, LA
15	Darius Hanks	WR	6-0	185	Sr.	Norcross, GA
48	Rowdy Harrell	LB	6-0	219	Sr.	Moundville
5	Jerrell Harris	LB	6-3	242	Sr.	Gadsden
1	Demetrius Hart	RB	5-9	187	Fr.	Orlando, FL
30	Dont'a Hightower	LB	6-4	260	Jr.	Lewisburg, TN
21	Ben Howell	RB	5-9	202	Jr.	Gordo
42	Adrian Hubbard	LB	6-6	237	Fr.	Lawrenceville, GA
62	Brandon Ivory	DL	6-4	308	Fr.	Memphis, TN
35	Nico Johnson	LB	6-3	245	Jr.	Andalusia
57	Aaron Joiner	OL	6-2	275	Jr.	Florence
75	Barrett Jones	OL	6-5	311	Jr.	Memphis, TN
82	Harrison Jones	TE	6-4	248	Fr.	Memphis, TN
9	Phelon Jones	DB	5-11	194	Sr.	Mobile
36	Chris Jordan	LB	6-3	240	Sr.	Brentwood, TN
43	Sam Kearns	DB	5-7	155	Sr.	Mobile
21	Dre Kirkpatrick	DB	6-3	192	Jr.	Gadsden
59	Arie Kouandjio	OL	6-5	309	Fr.	Beltsville, MD
42	Eddie Lacy	RB	6-0	220	So.	Geismar, LA
37	Robert Lester	DB	6-2	210	Jr.	Foley
95	Brandon Lewis	DL	6-3	288	Jr.	Pleasant Grove
78	Chad Lindsay	OL	6-2	287	Fr.	The Woodlands, TX
72	Tyler Love	OL	6-6	307	Jr.	Mountain Brook
51	Wilson Love	DL	6-3	276	Fr.	Mountain Brook
29	Will Lowery	DB	5-10	180	Jr.	Hoover
7	Keiwone Malone	WR	5-11	165	Fr.	Memphis, TN
29	Cody Mandell	P	6-4	202	So.	Lafayette, LA
4	Marquis Maze	WR	5-10	180	Sr.	Birmingham
24	Nathan McAlister	WR	5-11	165	So.	Russellville
10	A.J. McCarron	QB	6-4	205	So.	Mobile
52	Alfred McCullough	OL	6-2	311	Sr.	Athens
24	DeQuan Menzie	DB	6-0	198	Sr.	Columbus, GA
28	Dee Milliner	DB	6-1	196	So.	Millbrook
56	William Ming	DL	6-3	283	So.	Athens
97	Brandon Moore	DL	6-5	309	So.	Montgomery
32	C.J. Mosley	LB	6-2	234	So.	Theodore
83	Kevin Norwood	WR	6-2	193	So.	D'Iberville, MS
18	Morgan Ogilvie	QB	6-0	198	Jr.	Mountain Brook
53	Anthony Orr	DL	6-4	258	Fr.	Madison
2	Tana Patrick	LB	6-3	236	So.	Bridgeport
27	Nick Perry	DB	6-1	205	So.	Prattville
54	Russell Raines	OL	6-2	281	So.	Satsuma
3	Trent Richardson	RB	5-11	224	Jr.	Pensacola, FL
94	Darrington Sentimore	DL	6-3	273	So.	Norco, LA
90	Jeremy Shelley	PK	5-10	165	Jr.	Raleigh, NC
79	Austin Shepherd	OL	6-5	321	Fr.	Buford, GA
18	Blake Sims	ATH	6-0	212	Fr.	Gainesville, GA
14	Phillip Sims	QB	6-2	217	Fr.	Chesapeake, VA
71	Allen Skelton	OL	6-1	267	Jr.	Coker
17	Brad Smelley	H	6-3	229	Sr.	Tuscaloosa
38	Petey Smith	LB	6-1	260	Fr.	Tampa, FL
92	Damion Square	DL	6-3	285	Jr.	Houston, TX
61	Anthony Steen	OL	6-3	303	So.	Lambert, MS
47	Ed Stinson	LB	6-4	279	So.	Homestead, FL
46	William Strickland	WR	6-0	191	Sr.	Tuscaloosa
3	Vinnie Sunseri	LB	6-0	217	Fr.	Tuscaloosa
51	Carson Tinker	ST	6-1	220	Jr.	Murfreesboro, TN
26	Nick Tinker	RB	5-10	207	So.	Ralph
87	Chris Underwood	TE	6-4	243	Sr.	Vestavia Hills
41	Courtney Upshaw	LB	6-2	265	Sr.	Eufaula
73	William Vlachos	OL	6-1	294	Sr.	Mountain Brook
84	Brian Vogler	TE	6-7	252	Fr.	Columbus, GA
65	Chance Warmack	OL	6-3	320	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
91	Alex Watkins	LB	6-3	234	Sr.	Brownsville, TN
11	Ranzell Watkins	DB	5-9	170	So.	Charlotte, NC
2	DeAndrew White	H	6-0	181	Fr.	Houston, TX
20	Jarrick Williams	DB	6-1	210	So.	Mobile
44	Jay Williams	P	6-3	221	Fr.	Thomasville
54	Jesse Williams	DL	6-4	319	Jr.	Brisbane, Australia
63	Kellen Williams	OL	6-3	305	So.	Lawrenceville, GA
89	Michael Williams	TE	6-6	269	Jr.	Reform
9	Nick Williams	WR	5-10	185	So.	Fort Lauderdale, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
Greg McElroy	13	169.0	222	313	5	70.9	2987	20	85	229.8
A.J. McCarron	13	151.2	30	48	0	62.5	389	3	47	29.9

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
Julio Jones	13	78	1133	14.5	7	68	87.2
Marquis Maze	13	38	557	14.7	3	48	42.8
Darius Hanks	13	32	456	14.2	3	51	35.1

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
Mark Ingram	11	158	903	28	875	5.5	13	54	79.5
T. Richardson	11	112	719	19	700	6.2	6	65	63.6
Eddie Lacy	12	56	411	5	406	7.2	6	62	33.8

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M. Barron, 75, D. Hightower 69, C.J. Mosley 67
Tackles for loss: C. Upshaw 14.5, M. Dareus 11, D. Square 7
Sacks: C. Upshaw 7, M. Dareus 4.5, A. Watkins 2.5
Interceptions: R. Lester 8, M. Barron 3, D. Kirkpatrick 3

NOTEBOOK

One of the more interesting position changes in the spring involved **Barrett Jones**.

After starting 25 games and earning All-SEC and All-America honors at right guard, Jones was moved to left tackle for the entire spring game.

Nick Saban did not say if the move would be permanent, but Jones played well there, and it would open the door for more playing time for sophomore **Anthony Steen** at guard. Steen started two games at right guard when Jones was injured last season.

• Alabama had three coaching changes in the offseason. In January, **Jeff Stoutland** joined the Crimson Tide staff as offensive line coach. **Mike Groh**, the former Virginia quarterback, joined the staff as wide receivers coach and recruiting coordinator. **Chris Rumpf** came from Clemson and will coach the defensive line.

• Former Alabama All-American DeMeco Ryans, now a star with the Houston Texans, announced a pledge for a scholarship gift of $300,000 to endow a full scholarship in Ryans' name for a deserving football student-athlete studying in the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration.

• A nine-foot tall bronze statue of Nick Saban was unveiled prior to Alabama's spring game. The statue joined those of Paul "Bear" Bryant, Gene Stallings, Wallace Wade and Frank Thomas as Alabama coaches to win national championships. The statues are part of Alabama's "Walk of Champions" outside Bryant-Denny Stadium.

• A-Day attendance was 92,310, which set a new spring game attendance record, breaking the previous record of 92,138 set in Saban's first year of 2007. This was Saban's fifth spring game at Alabama, and crowds have exceeded 90,000 in three of those games. The five-year Saban attendance record is more than 435,000.

• Spring game stars included **Trent Richardson**, who had 167 yards (49 rushing, 85 receiving, 33 returning), including a 20-yard touchdown reception ... Free safety **Mark Barron** scored the spring game's first touchdown with a 96-yard return of a recovered fumble. Barron, still recovering from a torn pectoral muscle suffered against Auburn, wore a black "no contact" jersey, but it wouldn't have mattered on the touchdown return because he was so far ahead of anyone chasing him … plus he had a three-man escort of defensive teammates.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On QB play:** "Alabama's success will depend largely on how the quarterback plays. That was the difference in them last year. (Greg) McElroy was good the year before. Last year he was not good. One coach in the league told me if Alabama had Mike Hartline (of Kentucky) they'd have won it again, easy. McElroy was a big part of the problem last year."

• **On Nick Saban:** "Nick Saban has a very stable program that re-generates itself every year. The biggest thing Nick's got is the full support of the administration, and the administration will do whatever it has to do to be successful. He's got everything in place, almost like it perpetuates itself."

• **On the running back situation:** "I think they'll miss (Mark) Ingram, but I think Trent Richardson is better."

Mark Barron
Photo by RD Moore

to play them here.

"We probably play together more as unit than we did last season. Dont'a (Hightower) has assumed a leadership role on this team."

Having Hightower back and healthy from a serious knee injury suffered in 2009 will be a huge key for the linebacking corps.

"I feel a lot better. I just feel like my old self. I'm back in shape and my weight is down, and I'm playing a lot faster," Hightower said after Alabama's spring game. "It feels great after all the hard work I put in."

Hightower will join Nico Johnson, Jerrell Harris and Courtney Upshaw as the starting linebackers. C.J. Mosley, Alex Watkins, Trey DePriest and Chris Jordan should also see extensive playing time.

The corners will be manned by veterans Dre Kirkpatrick and Dee Milliner or DeQuan Menzie, while the free safety will be Robert Lester, with Mark Barron at strong safety.

Barron, who led the SEC in interceptions in 2009 with seven, is still recovering from a torn pectoral muscle suffered against Auburn. Lester led the SEC with eight interceptions last year.

Along the front, senior Josh Chapman started 12 games last season and will again anchor the line. He has recorded 65 tackles in his career. Square started six games last season, his first since tearing his ACL two years ago. He will be backed up by junior college transfer Quinton Dial. Ed Stinson came out of spring drills as the starter at the other defensive end position after moving to the line from a linebacker spot.

Undra Billingsley and Darrington Sentimore also will see extensive playing time at defensive end.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jeremy Shelley returns after leading the Crimson Tide in scoring last season with 86 points. He was 12 of 16 on field-goal attempts and was good on 50 of 51 extra-point attempts. Cade Foster handled kickoffs and longer field-goal attempts. He was 7 of 9 on field-goal attempts.

Punter Cody Mandell started all 13 games a year ago as a true freshman in-

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Trent Richardson

After starring as a backup to Heisman Trophy winner Mark Ingram, Richardson finally gets a chance to be the man for the Tide offense. ... In two years, Richardson has gained 1,451 yards on 257 carries for an average of 5.6 yards per carry, and he has scored 14 touchdowns. ... He is a threat in the passing game as well, having caught 39 passes for 392 yards.

EMERGING STAR

FS Robert Lester

The junior free safety seemingly came out of nowhere to lead Alabama and the SEC in interceptions last season when he picked off eight passes after having no picks as a redshirt freshman in 2009. ... In addition, Lester had four passes broken up and 12 defended. He logged two quarterback hurries and a sack. ... He also recovered a fumble and returned it 89 yards. ... He was a second-team All-SEC pick.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Dee Hart

Hart, a 5-9, 187-pound running back out of Dr. Phillips High in Orlando, enrolled early and went through spring ball, where he was impressive. ... A *Parade* All-American. ... Listed by Rivals.com as the No. 1 all-purpose back in the nation. ... He set 23 school records at Dr. Phillips and was the U.S. Army National Player of the Year. ... In the Alabama spring game, he scored a touchdown on a 17-yard run and caught three passes for 11 yards.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.1	35
Rushing	184.6	30
Passing	171.1	97
Total	355.8	63
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	14.3	7
Rushing	74.1	2
Passing	189.4	30
Total	263.5	3
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 6	+ 0.43	33

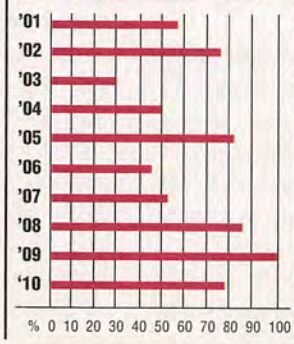
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.1	22
Rushing	215.1	12
Passing	187.9	92
Total	403.0	42
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	11.7	2
Rushing	78.1	2
Passing	166.0	10
Total	244.1	2
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 19	+ 1.36	4

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.7	18
Rushing	182.9	29
Passing	261.2	27
Total	444.1	22
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	13.5	3
Rushing	110.2	10
Passing	176.2	13
Total	286.4	5
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 12	+ 0.92	11

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

10-3, 5-3

W	SAN JOSE STATE	48-3
W	PENN STATE	24-3
W	at Duke	62-13
W	at Arkansas	24-20
W	FLORIDA	31-6
L	at South Carolina	21-35
W	OLE MISS	23-10
W	at Tennessee	41-10
L	at LSU	21-24
W	MISSISSIPPI STATE	30-10
W	GEORGIA STATE	63-7
L	AUBURN	27-28
	Capital One Bowl	
W	vs. Michigan State	49-7

PLAYER PROFILE

Trent Richardson
Photo by RD Moore

It's Richardson's Time to Shine

When Trent Richardson came out of Escambia High School in Pensacola, Fla., he brought with him some impressive numbers — 2,090 yards rushing, a 9.3 yards-per-carry average and 26 touchdowns. And those were just from his senior season.

He was being compared with another great running back from Escambia from a few years back — Emmitt Smith, who went on to great things as a Florida Gator and NFL running back.

The expectations were a heavy load for Richardson to carry on his 5-11, 224-pound frame, but he had the benefit of playing alongside Mark Ingram, who won the 2009 Heisman Trophy. When Ingram needed to catch his breath, in came Richardson, and the change didn't allow defenses to catch their breath.

Sharing time with Ingram in 2009, Richardson rushed for 751 yards and scored eight touchdowns. He also proved to be an asset in the passing game, catching 16 passes for 126 yards. He capped his freshman season with 109 yards rushing and two touchdowns as Alabama won the BCS national title over Texas.

Again sharing time with Ingram last season, the lightning-quick Richardson added another 700 yards rushing and six touchdowns. He caught 23 passes for 266 yards and four scores.

But now Richardson's running mate has gone on to the NFL, and the burden of Alabama's ground game falls squarely on Richardson.

"I'm feeling pretty good and I'm just ready to go," he said after being named MVP of Alabama's spring game.

"I can't wait to play that first game in September. It's all about staying focused now during the offseason — going to class, spending time with my family as much as possible and watching film as much as I can. I'm just trying to take it one day at a time so I can stay on top of my game and be a good example for the rest of the team."

Even though Richardson is obviously the man for the Crimson Tide offense, he will have help, much like he gave Ingram for two years. Eddie Lacy is his backup, and there's also true freshman Dee Hart.

Some wondered if Richardson would be a leader on and off the field like Ingram, but he put those fears to rest quickly.

"The thing about Trent is that he's a great teammate," offensive lineman Barrett Jones said. "He's been waiting around for a couple of years. Let's face it – he would've started anywhere else in the nation.

"I think he's going to be rewarded for that patience."

vited walk-on, punting 41 times for an average of 39.2 yards. He had nine kicks of more than 50 yards and 13 downed inside the opponent's 20-yard line.

Carson Tinker returns as the long snapper. Trent Richardson is listed as the No. 1 kickoff return man, but since he is now the No. 1 tailback, Marquis Maze could inherit the bulk of the return duties.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Any time you play a Southeastern Conference schedule, it will be loaded with pitfalls, and this year is no different for Alabama.

The Crimson Tide will open at home with Kent State before stepping into a Big Ten matchup against Penn State at Happy Valley. The Tide will play one more tune-up against North Texas and then open the SEC slate with five consecutive conference foes before getting an off week.

Three of those five games are at Bryant-Denny Stadium — Arkansas, Vanderbilt and Tennessee — with road trips to Florida and Ole Miss set for the first three weeks of October.

Alabama will finish its conference schedule at home against LSU the first Saturday in November and then on the road at Mississippi State and Auburn, with only a home game against Georgia Southern between the Bulldogs and the defending national champion Tigers.

— Ben Cook

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	KENT STATE	5-7
Sept. 10	at Penn State	7-6
Sept. 17	North Texas	3-9
Sept. 24	ARKANSAS	10-3
Oct. 1	at Florida	8-5
Oct. 8	VANDERBILT	2-10
Oct. 15	at Ole Miss	4-8
Oct. 22	TENNESSEE	6-7
Nov. 5	LSU	11-2
Nov. 12	at Mississippi State	9-4
Nov. 19	GEORGIA SOUTHERN	10-5
Nov. 26	at Auburn	14-0

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ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

For more coverage of the Razorbacks, visit arkansas.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Garrick McGee **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Willy Robinson** **STADIUM: Reynolds Razorback Stadium: 72,000**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
10-3, 6-2 SEC (T-2nd, West)

COACH:
Bobby Petrino: At Arkansas, 23-15, 3 years; overall: 64-24, 7 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 6 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Knile Davis, WR Joe Adams, WR Greg Childs, WR Jarius Wright, DE Jake Bequette, DE Tenarius Wright, MLB Jerry Franklin, FS Tramain Thomas

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Defense and special teams, which were so weak upon Petrino's 2008 arrival, are now team strengths. The receiving corps may be the nation's best, and All-SEC RB Knile Davis is pushed by junior speedsters Ronnie Wingo and Dennis Johnson.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Can a new starting quarterback get the ball to the right people with the right plays? Can a young offensive line with new starting tackles protect for the pass and block for the run? Both cornerback positions and one linebacker spot likely won't be resolved until late August at the earliest.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Ryan Mallett, TE D.J. Williams, OT DeMarcus Love, OT Ray Dominguez, OG Wade Grayson, DE Damario Ambrose, CB Ramon Broadway

OVERVIEW:
Petrino has the skill position engine to rev another big-time offense and be top speed by the end of the season. But these Razorbacks might be just as likely to lead with defense, and it's that combination that could drive Arkansas into a BCS bowl.

Offensive-minded Razorbacks Think Big on Defense

Arkansas' offense often failed to display a winning edge in the spring. Chances are, it will be just fine in the fall. But the offense no longer shoulders the burden of the entire program.

Yes, perhaps it's time, in coach Bobby Petrino's fourth season, for the defense to carry the offense ... well, at least early in the season.

Given Petrino's penchant for explosive offenses and the presence of All-SEC running back Knile Davis and maybe the nation's best receiving corps with Joe Adams, Greg Childs, Jarius Wright and Cobi Hamilton, it's hard to envision this offense struggling.

However, a first-time starting quarterback, brand new offensive tackles and graduating a Mackey Award-winning tight end can put a crimp in any offense.

It seemed to crimp the Arkansas attack in the spring. Petrino has talented pieces to deploy, but, with so many unproven parts, much work needs to be done to develop the intricacies of his offense.

"The first couple of springs we had a lot of long runs," running backs coach Tim Horton said. "This spring we didn't have the long runs. I hope it's because our defense is better."

It should be.

A defense that came of age in Arkansas' 10-3 season showed the best of its experience in the spring.

By the end of spring, even the offensive coaches would admit that the defense had the edge — especially off the edge.

Defensive ends Jake Bequette and Tenarius Wright are All-SEC caliber or better. So is free safety Tramain Thomas.

The tackles are deep and experienced, and Arkansas added a difference-making talent — junior college transfer Robert Thomas — to the position.

Senior linebackers Jerry Franklin and Jerico Nelson were play-making plusses on bad defenses for two years ... and even bigger plusses on a better defense last year.

The biggest key to this defense, and ultimately to this team, may be Petrino turning a deaf ear and blind eye to talk radio and Internet message boards.

"Free Willy," they demanded, seeking the ouster of defensive coordinator Willy Robinson, who in 2008 inherited a defense playing more freshmen than a JV team.

Those 2008 and 2009 novices grew together under the same coordinator and in the same system.

Now they comprise the strength of the team.

OFFENSE

An Arkansas offense returning an All-SEC running back, a fabulous foursome of receivers and a quarterback who completed 25 of 34 passes for 332 yards and four touchdowns against national champion Auburn shouldn't have problems.

But it does.

Here are some obstacles. Arkansas:

- Has to replace both offensive tackles.
- Loses a Mackey Award-winning tight end.
- Loses a strong-armed starting quarterback who also impacted the running game. Ryan Mallett seldom ran the ball, but his ability to check to the right run for the right occasion was an experienced knack. Even as a fourth-year junior, does Tyler Wilson have that grasp of the offense? He lacks extensive game time, other than subbing for an injured Mallett last season against Auburn and Ole Miss.

"The running game needs to im-

Greg Childs
Photo by Wesley Hitt/Getty Images

prove," Petrino said. "It must improve with the quarterbacks, the offensive front with our running backs, and with our receivers blocking better down field."

Improving the run became so urgent in the spring that Petrino admits he sometimes overlooked Wilson's passing.

Petrino said Wilson made better all-round decisions at the end of spring drills.

In contrast, Wilson's challenger, sophomore quarterback Brandon Mitchell, must flush a poor Red-White game and remember overall "he had a good spring," Petrino said.

Though losing short-yardage big back Broderick Green for 2011 — he suffered a torn ACL in the spring — the running back position returns proven playmaker Dennis Johnson from a 2010 season-ending surgery and the speedy Ronnie Wingo Jr. to complement junior Knile Davis.

Davis, an All-SEC running back, rushed for 1,322 yards and 13 touchdowns last year.

Collectively, senior receivers Joe Adams, Greg Childs, Jarius Wright and junior Cobi Hamilton caught 170 passes last season for 2,870 yards and 23 touchdowns.

Childs should be healthy in the fall upon rehabbing from November knee surgery.

Ex-wide receiver Chris Gragg gets first call at tight end, but he must improve his blocking to play every down.

Returning starting center Travis Swanson, starting guards Alvin Bailey and Grant Cook — formerly a part-time starter — anchor the line.

Tackle remains a mystery. At least half of this quartet — early enrolled freshman Brey Cook, early enrolled JC transfer Jason Peacock, sophomore Anthony Oden and fifth-year senior Grant Freeman — must emerge at the pivotal positions on the line.

DEFENSE

This Arkansas defense enjoys living on the edge.

Starting defensive ends Jake Bequette and Tenarius Wright, plus backups Chris Smith, Colton Miles-Nash and Jerico Nelson, bedeviled the Razorbacks' offense with pressure in the spring.

It should vex Arkansas opponents in the fall.

Wright had just as good or a better spring than Bequette, who earned second-team All-SEC honors last year. The duo combined for 13 sacks and eight quarterback hurries in 2010.

Nelson made 87 tackles, No. 2 on the team last season, with 11 for lost yardage.

A late-spring disciplinary issue with top reserve outside linebacker Ross Rasner clouds his early-season game status. Rasner shared starting duties with Nelson before Petrino suspended Rasner indefinitely.

Tyler Wilson
Photo by John Williamson

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tyler Wilson	Jr.	Has been waiting for the job for three years.	Brandon Mitchell, So.
RB	Knile Davis*	Jr.	All-SEC player is backed by two talented runners.	Ronnie Wingo Jr., Jr.
WR	Greg Childs*	Sr.	Made 46 receptions in only eight games last season.	Cobi Hamilton, Jr.
WR	Joe Adams*	Sr.	5-11 receiver is slippery in space after the catch.	Julian Horton, So.
WR	Jarius Wright*	Sr.	Has the team's best deep speed.	Marquel Wade, Fr.
TE	Chris Gragg	Jr.	Former wideout has the hands ... but he must block, too.	Austin Tate, So.
LT	Anthony Oden	So	Has recovered from a bout with mono.	Grant Freeman, Sr.
LG	Grant Cook	Sr.	Has gained experience as a reserve in past two years.	Seth Oxner, Sr.
C	Travis Swanson*	So.	Started every game in 2010.	Tyler Deacon, Jr.
RG	Alvin Bailey*	So.	Earned national Freshman All-American honors.	Seth Oxner, Sr.
RT	Jason Peacock	Jr.	Position battle between JC rookie and a freshman.	Brey Cook, Fr.
K	Zach Hocker*	So.	Arrived as a punter but place-kicks instead.	Eduardo Camara, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jake Bequette*	Sr.	Savvy player earned second-team All-SEC last year.	Chris Smith, So.
DT	Byran Jones	So.	Both Joneses have rehabbed from surgeries.	D.D. Jones, Jr./A. Davis, Jr.*
DT	Robert Thomas	So.	Massive JC transfer is Hogs' most promising newcomer.	DeQuinta Jones, Jr.*
DE	Tenarius Wright	Jr.	Outstanding spring comes after a strong fall.	Colton Miles-Nash, Jr.
LB	Jerico Nelson*	Sr.	Not very big, but he makes plays all over the field.	Ross Rasner, Jr.
LB	Jerry Franklin*	Sr.	Leading tackler three years running (100 last year).	Braylon Mitchell, Fr.
LB	Bret Harris	Sr.	This starting position is definitely not resolved.	Terrell Williams, Jr.
CB	Isaac Madison*	Sr.	Winston also in the mix at other corner spot.	Darius Winston, Jr.
CB	Jerry Mitchell	So.	Will be August before coaches pick boundary CB.	De'Anthony Curtis, Sr.
SS	Eric Bennett	So.	Has cornerback speed but was moved to safety.	Darrell Smith, So.
FS	Tramain Thomas*	Sr.	Leader of the secondary; second-team All-SEC in '10.	Elton Ford, Sr.
P	Dylan Breeding*	Jr.	Improved dramatically last fall.	Westin Cox, Fr.

*Returning Starter

RAZORBACKS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Brey Cook
A talented four-star in-state prospect from Springdale, Cook arguably is the Razorbacks' most heralded — and college ready — recruit from the class of 2011. An early enrollee, he got a significant amount of snaps this spring at tackle and is expected to play quite a bit this fall and possibly even start.

Tevin Mitchel
A four-star recruit from Texas, Mitchel appears to be arriving in Fayetteville at just the right time. Not only is he talented, but the Razorbacks have an immediate need at cornerback, where they are relatively thin. Mitchel has an excellent chance to make the rotation at that position.

Marquel Wade
An early enrollee, the 5-11, 180-pound Wade is a talented receiver who almost certainly will see action this fall for the pass-happy Razorbacks. Wade apparently performed quite well in the spring, and with a solid fall camp could further boost his stock — and his position on the depth chart.

THE SLEEPER

Lonnie Gosha
Once a heralded defensive tackle recruit, Gosha's stock dropped dramatically after a less-than-stellar senior season. But Arkansas may have found a steal should Gosha's effort match his frame. If Gosha is motivated in Fayetteville, he could develop into a solid SEC player.

Committments	30
Average Stars	3.07
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	4
★★★☆☆	24
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	92
National Rank: 24	SEC: 9

2012 NEEDS: Running back, running back and running back. This is an area that the Razorbacks must address and now. During the past two recruiting cycles, Arkansas has not signed too many players at this position, making it critical they land at least two and possibly even three in the Class of 2012. Receiver is another area of need, but that's always the case at Arkansas because it throws the football so much. The Razorbacks have their sights set on some pretty big fish at that spot.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Brandon Allen	QB	6-2	214	✪✪✪✪	Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Arkansas...Rated as the nation's No. 5 pro-style quarterback...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl... Threw for 3,408 yards and 38 touchdowns as a senior.						
Horace Arkadie	DE	6-4	227	✪✪✪	Irving, TX	Irving
Recorded 77 tackles and four sacks as a senior...Had 67 tackles as a junior...Chose Arkansas over Purdue and Virginia.						
Austin Beck	OL	6-8	285	✪✪✪	Nowata, OK	Nowata
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Oklahoma by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 71 offensive tackle...Chose Arkansas over Baylor, Illinois and Missouri.						
Brey Cook	OL	6-7	314	✪✪✪✪	Springdale, AR	Har-Ber
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Arkansas...Rated as the nation's No. 12 offensive tackle...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Arkansas in January.						
Marcus Danenhauer	OL	6-5	315	✪✪✪	Bentonville, AR	Bentonville
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 offensive guard...Selected first-team Class 7A West All-State.						
Demetrius Dean	TE	6-3	245	✪✪✪	Fayetteville, AR	Fayetteville
Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 28 tight end...Had 29 catches for 444 yards and 11 touchdowns as a senior.						
Kelvin Fisher Jr.	ATH	5-11	173	✪✪✪	Gilbert, AZ	Higley
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Arizona by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 athlete...Chose Arkansas over Oregon, Washington, Arizona State and Pittsburgh.						
Trey Flowers	DE	6-3	240	✪✪✪	Huntsville, AL	Columbia
Two-time all-state selection in Alabama...Also competes on the Columbia basketball team...Chose Arkansas over UAB, Georgia Tech and South Alabama.						
Quinta Funderburk	WR	6-5	204	✪✪✪	Chesapeake, VA	Oscar Smith
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Virginia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 48 wide receiver...Caught 65 passes for 1,464 yards and 15 touchdowns as a senior... Enrolled at Arkansas in January.						
Rohan Gaines	ATH	5-11	178	✪✪✪	Bainbridge, GA	Bainbridge
Recorded 60 tackles with four tackles for a loss and one interception as a senior...Second-team All-Region 1AAAA selection...Also played point guard on the basketball team.						
Tyler Gilbert	LB	6-3	245	✪✪	Charlotte, NC	North Carolina Tech
Racked up 62 tackles and five sacks as a senior...Had 36 tackles and seven tackles for loss as a junior...Enrolled at Arkansas in January.						
Lonnie Gosha	DT	6-2	270	✪✪✪	Lake Butler, FL	Union County
Rated as the No. 83 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 42 defensive tackle...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Recorded 140 tackles, 15 sacks and two interceptions as a senior.						
Brock Haman	LB	6-4	235	✪✪✪	Scottsdale, AZ	Saguaro
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Arizona by Rivals.com...Chose Arkansas over Arizona, Arizona State and Oregon State.						
Alonzo Highsmith	LB	6-1	220	✪✪✪	Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix C.C.
Recorded 94 tackles, 12 tackles for loss and four sacks in 2010...Chose Arkansas over Washington, SMU and Cincinnati...Son of former University of Miami and NFL running back Alonzo Highsmith Sr.						
Demarcus Hodge	DT	6-1	300	✪✪✪	Monroe, LA	Neville
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 defensive tackle...Chose Arkansas over Mississippi State, TCU, Tennessee and Texas A&M.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Darrell Kelly-Thomas	DE	6-2	220	✪✪✪	Lufkin, TX	Lufkin
Recorded 40 tackles and four sacks as a senior...Chose Arkansas over Baylor, Kansas State, Houston and TCU.						
Davyon McKinney	WR	6-3	180	✪✪✪	Forrest City, AR	Forrest City
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Had 21 catches for 453 yards and three touchdowns as a senior.						
Keante Minor	WR	6-0	194	✪✪✪	East St. Louis, IL	East St. Louis
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 64 wide receiver...Had 55 catches for 1,022 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior.						
Tevin Mitchel	DB	6-0	175	✪✪✪✪	Mansfield, TX	Legacy
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Texas...Rated as the nation's No. 13 cornerback...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Grady Ollison	DE	6-5	273	✪✪✪	Malvern, AR	Malvern
Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 30 strongside defensive end...Had 66 tackles and three sacks as a senior.						
Jason Peacock	OL	6-5	325	✪✪✪	Glendora, CA	Citrus C.C.
Earned second-team all-conference honors in 2010...Chose Arkansas over Arizona, Houston, Mississippi State, New Mexico and Utah.						
Andrew Peterson	TE	6-5	250	✪✪✪	Dallas, TX	Seagoville
Had eight catches for 220 yards and three touchdowns as a senior...Chose Arkansas over Nebraska and Texas A&M.						
Jashaud Sims	ATH	6-5	210	✪✪✪	Dickinson, TX	Dickinson
Had 110 tackles, 18 pass breakups and three interceptions as a junior and followed that up with 49 tackles, eight pass breakups, five sacks and four interceptions in an injury-shortened senior season.						
Kiero Small	LB	5-10	255	✪✪	Salinas, CA	Hartnell C.C.
Led his squad in tackles for a second-straight season in 2010 with 120 total stops, including 21 for loss...Racked up 109 tackles in 2009.						
Mitch Smothers	OL	6-4	291	✪✪✪	Springdale, AR	Springdale
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 17 offensive guard...Chose Arkansas over Auburn, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Missouri, Oklahoma State, South Carolina and UCLA.						
Robert Thomas	DT	6-3	325	✪✪✪	Coffeyville, KS	Coffeyville C.C.
Had 48 tackles, 15 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks in 2010...Enrolled at Arkansas in January.						
Marquel Wade	WR	5-11	180	✪✪✪✪	New Berlin, NY	Milford Academy
Caught 26 passes for 565 yards and six touchdowns for Milford Academy in 2010... Enrolled at Arkansas in January.						
Kody Walker	RB	6-1	230	✪✪✪	Jefferson City, MO	Jefferson City
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Missouri by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 running back...Chose Arkansas over Missouri.						
Brett Weir	DB	6-4	217	✪✪✪	London, Ontario	St. Thomas Aquinas
Saw time at quarterback, wide receiver and running back on offense as a senior, totaling more than 2,000 yards passing and more than 1,000 rushing yards...Played safety on defense and also played basketball and participated in track.						
Kane Whitehurst	WR	6-0	175	✪✪✪	Alpharetta, GA	Chattahoochee
Had 84 catches for 1,378 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior...Cousin of former Clemson and current NFL quarterback Charlie Whitehurst.						

RAZORBACKS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
3	Joe Adams	WR	5-11	190	Sr.	Little Rock
13	Seth Armbrust	S	5-9	190	Sr.	Little Rock
99	Lavunce Askew	DT	6-3	290	Sr.	Camden
67	Alvin Bailey	OG	6-5	319	So.	Broken Arrow, OK
49	Jatashun Beachum	DT	6-1	280	Fr.	Dallas, TX
14	Eric Bennett	S	5-11	190	So.	Tulsa, OK
91	Jake Bequette	DE	6-5	271	Sr.	Little Rock
63	Colby Berna	OL	6-5	295	So.	Fayetteville
14	Dylan Breeding	P	6-1	211	Jr.	Hoover, AL
62	Nick Brewer	SNP	6-1	221	Jr.	Austin, TX
47	Cameron Bryan	K	5-10	176	Jr.	Oklahoma City, OK
16	Brian Buehner	QB	5-11	186	Fr.	Louisville, KY
22	Alex Cacciarelli	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	Brentwood, MO
97	Ryan Calender	TE	6-7	248	So.	Caddo Mills, TX
40	Eduardo Camara	K	5-9	164	Fr.	Cedar Hill, TX
24	Daunte Carr	S	6-2	212	Fr.	Gainesville, GA
75	Luke Charpentier	OL	6-4	305	Fr.	River Ridge, LA
85	Greg Childs	WR	6-3	217	Sr.	Warren
94	Will Coleman	DE	6-3	253	Jr.	Helena
74	Brey Cook	OT	6-7	317	Fr.	Springdale
72	Grant Cook	OG	6-4	318	Sr.	Jonesboro
24	Westin Cox	P	6-0	181	Fr.	Jonesboro
61	Brett Craine	OT	6-5	290	Jr.	Pine Bluff
23	De'Anthony Curtis	CB	5-9	211	Sr.	Camden
51	Alfred Davis	DT	6-1	326	Jr.	College Park, GA
7	Knile Davis	RB	6-0	230	Jr.	Missouri City, TX
76	Tyler Deacon	OL	6-4	300	Jr.	Little Rock
73	Charles Dement	OG	6-6	298	Fr.	Paris
16	Ryan Farr	S	6-1	195	Jr.	Little Rock
57	Cam Feldt	OG	6-4	290	Fr.	Pilot Point, TX
9	Elton Ford	S	6-0	210	Sr.	Alpharetta, GA
34	Jerry Franklin	LB	6-1	245	Sr.	Marion
79	Grant Freeman	OT	6-7	305	Sr.	Paris
5	Quinta Funderburk	WR	6-3	200	Fr.	Chesapeake, VA
28	Greg Gatson	CB	5-10	180	Sr.	Memphis, TN
58	Ray Gervasi	C	6-2	307	Fr.	Orinda, CA
46	Tyler Gilbert	LB	6-3	244	Fr.	Sorrento, LA
80	Chris Gragg	TE	6-3	236	Jr.	Warren
29	Broderick Green	RB/FB	6-2	244	Sr.	Little Rock
57	Jared Green	DT	6-0	315	Sr.	Little Rock
86	Telvin Griffin	WR	5-11	188	Sr.	Texarkana
56	Blake Gunderson	OG	6-3	298	Jr.	Rockwall, TX
11	Cobi Hamilton	WR	6-3	209	Jr.	Texarkana, TX
32	Bret Harris	LB	6-0	224	Sr.	Irving, TX
41	Forbes Harris	K	6-1	185	Fr.	Cordova, TN
43	John Henson	K	5-11	138	Fr	Southlake, TX
19	Javontee Herndon	WR	6-1	189	So.	Jacksonville, FL
18	Zach Hocker	K	6-0	180	So.	Russellville
84	Price Holmes	WR	6-3	206	Jr.	Batesville
2	Julian Horton	WR	6-1	194	So.	Norcross, GA
83	Maudrecus Humphrey	WR	6-3	185	So.	Hoover, AL
69	David Hurd	OT	6-6	300	Jr.	West Monroe, LA
96	Jeremiah Jackson	DT	6-3	281	So.	Hoover, AL
10	Hunter Jarvis	WR	5-8	171	So.	Fairview, TX
33	Dennis Johnson	RB	5-9	213	Jr.	Texarkana
48	Austin Jones	LB	6-2	230	So.	Dallas, TX
54	Byran Jones	DT	6-2	312	So.	Junction City
92	DeQuinta Jones	DT	6-5	307	Jr.	Bastrop, LA
18	Kealon Kellybrew	CB	5-10	174	Sr.	Little Rock
39	Jarrett Lake	LB	6-3	223	So.	Jenks, OK
35	Morgan Linton	FB	5-11	240	Fr.	Lonoke
6	Isaac Madison	CB	5-11	185	Sr.	Dallas, TX
47	Matt Marshall	LB	6-1	230	Jr.	Camden, NJ
93	A.J. McCray	DT	6-2	320	Fr.	Little Rock
90	Colton Miles-Nash	DE	6-6	261	Jr.	Sulphur Springs, TX
17	Brandon Mitchell	QB	6-4	230	So.	Amite, LA
10	Braylon Mitchell	LB	6-3	225	Fr.	Heber Springs
38	Jerry Mitchell	CB	6-1	214	So.	Mandeville, LA
55	Austin Moss	LB	6-3	231	So.	Rockwall, TX
31	Jerico Nelson	S/LB	5-10	211	Sr.	Destrehan, LA
78	Anthony Oden	OT	6-8	320	So.	Indianapolis, IN
60	Seth Oxner	OL	6-4	305	Sr.	Monticello
71	Jason Peacock	OL	6-4	334	Jr.	Milledgeville, GA
37	Brandon Pyle	FB	6-2	240	So.	Hallsville, TX
35	Ross Rasner	LB	6-0	209	Jr.	Waco, TX
82	Lance Ray	WR	6-3	207	So.	Havana, FL
26	Eric Redmon	CB	5-9	183	Fr.	Little Rock
26	William Serrano	WR	6-0	189	Jr.	Nashville
89	Denton Simek	TE	6-6	268	Fr.	Prague, OK
42	Chris Smith	DE	6-3	251	So.	Mount Ulla, NC
22	Darrell Smith	S	6-3	198	So.	Port St. Joe, FL
61	Zach Stadther	DT	6-1	295	Sr.	North Little Rock
64	Travis Swanson	C	6-5	305	So.	Kingwood, TX
87	Austin Tate	TE	6-6	253	So.	Harrison
98	Robert Thomas	DT	6-3	325	So.	Muskogee, OK
5	Tramain Thomas	S	6-0	198	Sr.	Winnie, TX
27	Alan Turner	S	6-0	202	Fr.	Junction City
88	Garrett Uekman	TE	6-4	254	Fr.	Little Rock
40	Michael Villegas	DE	6-4	238	Jr.	Springdale
1	Marquel Wade	WR	5-11	185	Fr.	Jacksonville, FL
9	Jacoby Walker	QB	6-2	220	Fr.	Houston, TX
30	Ronald Watkins	RB	5-9	190	Jr.	Stafford, VA
45	Allen Whitlow	FB	6-1	249	So.	Rogers
25	Terrell Williams	LB	6-3	232	Jr.	Tulsa, OK
8	Tyler Wilson	QB	6-3	215	Jr.	Greenwood
20	Ronnie Wingo, Jr.	RB	6-3	231	Jr.	St. Louis, MO
21	Darius Winston	CB	6-0	185	Jr.	West Helena
6	Brandon Wolford	WR	5-11	165	So.	Lakewood, CA
21	Justin Wortman	WR	5-9	170	Jr.	Cabot
4	Jarius Wright	WR	5-10	180	Sr.	Warren
43	Tenarius Wright	DE	6-2	252	Jr.	Memphis, TN

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
R. Mallett	13	163.65	266	411	12	64.7	3869	32	89	297.6
T. Wilson	6	155.40	34	51	3	66.7	453	4	54	75.5

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D.J. Williams	13	54	627	11.6	4	46	48.2
J. Adams	12	50	813	16.3	6	85	67.8
G. Childs	8	46	659	14.3	6	54	82.4

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Davis	13	204	1362	40	1322	6.5	13	71	101.7
B. Green	13	104	389	24	365	3.5	3	23	28.1
R. Wingo, Jr.	13	41	260	7	253	6.2	1	32	19.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Franklin 100, J. Nelson 87, T. Thomas 83
Tackles for loss: J. Franklin 13, A. Leon 12.5, J. Nelson 11
Sacks: J. Bequette 7, Jerry Franklin 6.5, T. Wright 6
Interceptions: T. Thomas 4, R. Crim 3, four tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

By the spring game it didn't take Judge Judy to rule **Tyler Wilson** the Arkansas Razorbacks' starting quarterback.

About everyone pounded that gavel.

Everyone except the only judge that counts.

Coach **Bobby Petrino** said he won't pass judgment until August whether Wilson — a fourth-year junior who has been a backup — or third-year sophomore **Brandon Mitchell** is No. 1.

"You can't put everything into just the spring game," Petrino said. "You have to evaluate what went on throughout the weeks to know their strengths and what they need to work on."

The coach said there is one aspect neither can completely work on until the job is decided: Leadership.

"I think it will take care of itself once the competition is over with and we decide who the guy is going to be," Petrino said. "They both have good leadership qualities, but they both have a ways to go to do their jobs well to lead by example first."

• Whoever wins the job will hear about it, more than he wishes, probably.

Petrino coaches his quarterbacks unmercifully, the coach admits. So the starter gets more reps and less mercy.

"We have really tried to get after them and make them uncomfortable and put a lot of pressure on them," Petrino said. "One of my philosophies coaching quarterbacks is when they get to the game they think, 'The head coach is on the sidelines and I can just relax and play.'"

"That," Wilson said, "is just the way he coaches. It makes me a better quarterback."

• Offensive line coach **Chris Klenakis** contrasts the 2010 spring depth chart to his 2010 fall lineup, emphasizing there is no early line on forming the line.

"We talked last spring (2010) about naming starters," Klenakis said, "and I said, 'Let them compete in the fall.' We ended up with new centers and guards."

• Running back **Broderick Green** (torn ACL) appears to be the only letterman injured in the spring and definitely unable to play in the fall. A fifth-year senior, Green must appeal to the NCAA for a special hardship waiver to be granted eligibility in 2012.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Bobby Petrino:** "I think Bobby Petrino is the best offensive coach in the country, certainly in our league. He does more with less than anybody in our league, he really does. I'm a big Petrino fan. He does a good job evaluating guys and getting them to play winning football."

• **On the offense:** "They've got a quarterback-driven offense. … The thing about Arkansas is they've got enough receivers to make it a whole lot easier to play quarterback."

• **On the defense:** "I watched their spring game on TV and it said to me, 'How good is their defense.' It's going to be huge. There are some good defenses in the SEC West, so you've got to be able to score. But you can't light it up for 28-plus points every week."

Jake Bequette
Photo by RD Moore

The middle should be no opponent's comfort zone.

Senior middle linebacker Jerry Franklin has led the Razorbacks in tackles since 2008. He made 100 stops in 2010, including 13 for minus 60 yards with 6.5 sacks.

Senior free safety Tramain Thomas led the team with four interceptions. He is also a strong tackler, making 83 last season.

Seniors Lavunce Askew and Zach Stadther, plus fourth-year junior Alfred Davis, will anchor the defensive line with help from sophomore Byran Jones, junior D.D. Jones and sophomore JC transfer Robert Thomas. Byran Jones and D.D. Jones missed spring ball rehabbing from surgeries.

Thomas, originally an Arkansas signee in 2009, arrived in January as a redshirt sophomore from Northeastern Oklahoma Junior College. He made an immediate impact.

Defensive coordinator Willy Robinson is hoping to repeat last year's success, when he used senior Rudell Crim's cornerback speed at strong safety. This time, Robinson moved sophomore Eric Bennett from corner to strong safety.

Senior Elton Ford is the top reserve at either safety position.

Defensive question marks arise at cornerback and weakside linebacker. At the latter position, the staff is trying to differentiate between senior journeyman Bret Harris, junior Terrell Williams and sophomore Jarrett Lake. Williams was the top candidate entering the spring. Harris was the top candidate at the end of spring.

Last season, when senior boundary cornerback Ramon Broadway suffered a season-ending injury during the South Carolina game, the Hogs finished with Isaac Madison at field corner and Darius Winston at boundary corner. Robinson decided to make them compete for field corner in the spring.

Redshirt freshman Jerry Mitchell successfully converted from safety to cornerback in the spring. Senior Greg Gatson has a chance at field corner, and the coaches made a wise move to convert senior running back De'Anthony Curtis to corner.

Who starts where at the corners will be determined in preseason camp.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Special teams, often the Razorbacks' 2009 nightmare other than Dennis Johnson's kickoff returns, could become their 2011 dream.

Johnson, who returned a kickoff for a touchdown in 2008 and 2009, returns after major intestinal surgery ended his 2010 season at two games.

True freshman Marquel Wade, who enrolled for spring ball, provides potential double trouble on kick and punt returns. Joe Adams was fifth in the nation

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

FS Tramain Thomas

MVP candidates abound at receiver, running back and defensive end, so many that none seem irreplaceable. Safety Tramain Thomas, however, is the one player the Hogs can ill afford to lose. ... Was the Defensive MVP of the 2009 Liberty Bowl victory and an every-game starter in 2010 with 83 tackles, four interceptions and two fumble recoveries. ... Thomas intercepted two passes in the spring game, with at least one pick in every spring scrimmage. "He is the leader of our secondary," Petrino said.

EMERGING STAR

TE Chris Gragg

Even with NFL-draft quality wide receivers, a Petrino offense always throws plenty to the tight end. D.J. Williams led Arkansas in receptions in two of the previous three seasons and won the 2010 Mackey Award. ... Gragg, a fourth-year junior converted from receiver, could catch on where Williams left off. He's taller and faster, but Gragg's blocking must improve to fully factor into Petrino's plans.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Robert Thomas

In losses to national champion Auburn (Nick Fairley) and Sugar Bowl champion Ohio State (Cameron Heyward), Arkansas learned that great defensive tackles can raise a good team to great. Thomas (6-3, 325 pounds) arrived in January and could develop into that great one. ... "The addition of Robert Thomas is exciting to me," Bobby Petrino said, "because here's a guy who's real athletic and can rush the passer from inside with size." ... Had 15 tackles for loss last year at Coffeyville (Kan.) Community College.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	21.9	91
Rushing	113.5	97
Passing	259.6	23
Total	373.1	49
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.2	93
Rushing	170.8	90
Passing	204.4	54
Total	375.2	72
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 9	- 0.75	102

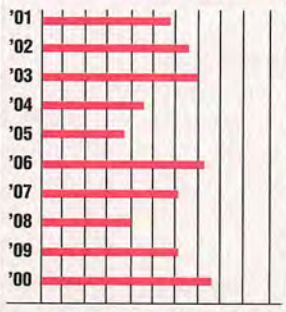
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	36.0	9
Rushing	131.8	81
Passing	295.5	10
Total	427.3	20
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.1	58
Rushing	152.7	73
Passing	248.5	99
Total	401.2	89
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 15	+ 1.15	6

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	36.5	17
Rushing	148.9	69
Passing	333.7	4
Total	482.5	9
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.4	47
Rushing	162.6	71
Passing	185.3	20
Total	347.9	36
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.8	51

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

10-3, 6-2

W	TENNESSEE TECH	44-3
W	LOUISIANA-MONROE	31-7
W	at Georgia	31-24
L	ALABAMA	20-24
W	at Texas A&M	24-17
L	at Auburn	43-65
W	OLE MISS	38-24
W	VANDERBILT	49-14
W	at South Carolina	41-20
W	UTEP	58-21
W	at Mississippi State 2(OT)	38-31
W	LSU	31-23
	Sugar Bowl	
L	vs. Ohio State	26-31

PLAYER PROFILE

Knile Davis
Photo by Nelson Chenault-US PRESSWIRE

Ready to Continue Run-game Tradition

"McFaddenesque" is not a term tossed lightly around the University of Arkansas.

Particularly by one who coached two-time Doak Walker Award winner/two-time Heisman Trophy runner-up Darren McFadden. Running backs coach Tim Horton coached McFadden's final Arkansas season in 2007.

But when asked if coaching Knile Davis last season felt "McFaddenesque," Horton replied: "It did."

Davis blossomed at midseason into an All-SEC talent for the 10-3 Hogs. He led SEC running backs with 1,322 yards, 13 touchdowns and a 6.4-yard average. Davis closed with five consecutive games with at least 100 yards — against UTEP, SEC East champion South Carolina, Mississippi State, LSU and Sugar Bowl champion Ohio State.

"There was a string (where) he was as productive as any running back in the country," Horton said, "and he was doing it against the LSU's, Ohio States and Mississippi States of the world — those are pretty lofty defensive football teams."

Davis almost made it look easy.

"I guess I was liked possessed," Davis said. "Everything was clicking and I was just in a groove and the momentum was carrying over each week. We got the chemistry between the quarterback and the O-line and the running backs and it was just clicking."

At the time, Davis and Horton gave big kudos to the line, quarterback and fullback. And they give those guys even bigger kudos now.

Quarterback Ryan Mallett, who checked into a lot of those runs, has turned pro. Fullback Van Stumon, tight end D.J. Williams, guard Wade Grayson and tackles DeMarcus Love and Ray Dominguez graduated.

Without them against a veteran Arkansas defense, Davis popped only a few long runs in spring drills. Spring was "not as productive" as they had hoped, Davis and Horton concur.

Yet it marked Knile's best of three Arkansas springs.

"The first spring I had a broken ankle," Davis said. "The next a broken collarbone. This spring nothing broke."

Including the big runs, but he says they will.

The 6-0, 230-pounder tested better than ever, a 4.2 40-yard dash, 535-pound squat and 415-pound bench press. So he asserts the runs will come as the chemistry overcomes like it did in 2010.

"You remember it wasn't great all the time last year," Davis said, "Matter of fact at the beginning they said it was the worst line ever. We just have to work together in the summer and in camp and it will come along."

last season, averaging 15.6 yards per punt return, including a school-record 97-yard touchdown against Ole Miss.

Junior Dylan Breeding blossomed in 2010, punting strategically — 18 inside the 20 — and for distance. He averaged 42.5 yards.

Sophomore place-kicker Zach Hocker converted 16 of 19 field goal attempts, including seven of nine between 40 and 51 yards.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Arkansas opens with home-baked cupcakes, which is what it needs as it breaks in a new starting quarterback and new offensive tackles against Missouri State and New Mexico.

The remaining schedule could break the Razorbacks if they aren't ready.

Eight of Arkansas' final 10 opponents bowled in the 2010 postseason, including non-conference foes Troy and Texas A&M, as well as league opponents Alabama, reigning national champion Auburn, LSU, Mississippi State, South Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi State.

Big games are obviously the conference opener at Alabama and the conference closer at LSU the day after Thanksgiving. But the South Carolina game — Nov. 5 in Fayetteville — always seems to be Arkansas' seasonal barometer.

Ole Miss and Vanderbilt didn't bowl last season, but Arkansas has to find a way to win those matchups on the SEC road.

— Nate Allen

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	MISSOURI STATE	5-6
Sept. 10	vs. New Mexico	1-11
Sept. 17	TROY	8-5
Sept. 24	at Alabama	10-3
Oct. 1	at Texas A&M	9-4
Oct. 8	AUBURN	14-0
Oct. 22	at Ole Miss	4-8
Oct. 29	at Vanderbilt	2-10
Nov. 5	SOUTH CAROLINA	9-5
Nov. 12	TENNESSEE	6-7
Nov. 19	vs. Mississippi State	9-4
Nov. 25	at LSU	11-2

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AUBURN TIGERS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Gus Malzahn | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ted Roof** | **STADIUM: Jordan-Hare Stadium: 87,451**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
14-0, 8-0 SEC (1st, SEC West)

COACH:
Gene Chizik — At Auburn: 22-5, 2 years; overall: 27-24, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
8; 4 offense, 4 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Michael Dyer, RB/KR Onterio McCalebb, WR Emory Blake, TE Philip Lutzenkirchen, OT Brandon Mosley, DE Corey Lemonier, DE Nosa Eguae, CB T'Sharvan Bell

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Gus Malzahn's offense has yet to be figured out. Dyer and McCalebb form a great one-two punch at tailback. Blake is a home-run threat, while Lutzenkirchen is arguably the best tight end in the league. Auburn returns a young but talented collection of pass rushers and experience at linebacker.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The quarterback position remains unsettled and the offensive line returns only one starter. The Tigers don't have a lot of depth at the WR position either. Defensively, Auburn must replace three starting defensive linemen, two starting safeties and a starting corner. The kicking game is also unproven.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Cam Newton, WR Darvin Adams, OT Lee Ziemba, C Ryan Pugh, DE Antoine Carter, DT Nick Fairley, LB Josh Bynes, CB/KR Demond Washington, K Wes Byrum

OVERVIEW:
Although Auburn has to replace a number of veterans on offense and defense, its roster is loaded with young talent. However, the Tigers face a much more difficult schedule than they did a year ago and every team on the docket will be gunning for them. That said, Auburn won't be an easy "W" for anyone and it should push for an eight-or nine-win season.

Are Chizik's Champs Flying Under the Radar?

When he walks into the Auburn athletic complex, rest assured that Gene Chizik knows he got the last laugh.

He's the former Iowa State coach who, at one time, Auburn fans didn't want (Turner Gill anyone?). He's the guy who couldn't recruit against, and beat, Alabama coach Nick Saban, according to a few state media outlets.

But ya know what? None of that matters now.

In just two years, Chizik accomplished what no other Auburn coach had in more than 50 years: He won a national title.

Behind Heisman Trophy winner Cam Newton's heroics, Lombardi Award winner Nick Fairley's dominating defense and the perfect blend of youth and experience, Auburn won the SEC crown and knocked off Oregon to claim its first ever BCS National Championship.

Although the Tigers success shocked most, offensive coordinator Gus Malzahn said it was a part of the process.

"You know, Coach Chizik, he had a plan," Malzahn said.

"He never really put a timetable on that plan and it just so happened that the pieces all fell into place this second year. We lost most of those guys that helped us do that, so our plan now is to try to get back to that game. It'll be a process, but we're all committed to that."

Speaking of Malzahn, he was courted by several teams — most notably Vanderbilt — for a head coaching gig, but he chose to remain at Auburn. Malzahn said Chizik and his coaching counterparts were a big factor in that return.

"Yeah, there's no doubt about that," Malzahn said.

"Coach Chizik is a great guy to work for and then our staff is extremely close. They're like family to me. And Auburn's a great place to raise a family. I've got two daughters that both go to Auburn right now, so we're very happy."

Although Auburn was fortunate enough to keep Malzahn, it lost defensive line coach Tracy Rocker to the Tennessee Titans. One of Rocker's goals was to coach in the NFL and the opportunity was too great for him to decline. Chizik replaced Rocker with former Tiger Mike Pelton, who was an All-SEC selection in 1994.

Entering 2011, the defending national champs aren't receiving much respect. Rest assured, that is being used as motivation, and past Auburn teams have often thrived as underdogs.

OFFENSE

Just like last season, junior Barrett Trotter finds himself in the No. 1 quarterback race, only this time he doesn't have a 6-6, 250-pound freak of an athlete named Cam Newton to compete against. This year it's sophomore Clint Moseley, who's a good athlete with size (6-3, 223) and a live arm.

Neither separated from the other in the A-Day Game, nor did they play poorly. Trotter completed 6 of 12 passes for 120 yards and a score, while Moseley hit 9 of 15 passes for 82 yards. Coordinator Gus Malzahn said he will name the starter when the time is right, but the competition likely will carry over to the fall.

"Barrett knows the offense extremely well," Malzahn said. "He's been behind the scenes for the last two-and-a-half years. He probably knows the offense as good or better than any quarterback I've had since I've been coaching college.

"Clint Moseley also has a good grasp of the offense. He's a big, strong kid that can make all the throws. I like to tell people he has the 'It' factor."

Michael Dyer
Photo by RD Moore

At tailback, the Tigers arguably have the SEC's best one-two punch in Michael Dyer and Onterio McCalebb. Dyer is the quintessential power back due to his compact frame (5-9, 206) and physical running style, while McCalebb is easily one of the fastest players in college football.

Look for Auburn's offense to lean on the talents of its veteran backfield while the offensive line jells early on.

"As far as a downhill runner, Dyer is probably as good as anybody you'll see," Malzahn said. "Onterio McCalebb is one of the best speed guys in the country. He's got another gear. He can flat-out get it."

Big-play threat Emory Blake and do-it-all tight end Philip Lutzenkirchen will be the team's primary pass-catching threats.

Blake led the team in touchdown receptions a year ago as a sophomore and doubles as a great blocker. Lutzenkirchen, meanwhile, spent time learning the receiver position during the spring in an effort to expand his role in the offense.

Veterans Quindarius Carr, DeAngelo Benton, Travante Stallworth and youngster Trovon Reed will be factors at receiver, as will a talented group of freshmen.

Up front, Brandon Mosley will man the right tackle position alongside guard John Sullen. A.J. Green, who had a season-ending knee injury after winning a starting tackle spot a year ago, will be the team's starting left tackle. He will be flanked by Jared Cooper.

Former walk-on Blake Burgess and true freshman Reese Dismukes are in a battle for the starting center spot, but look for Burgess to come out victorious.

"It's one of our big challenges," Malzahn said. "We're going to go like our offensive line goes."

DEFENSE

Auburn was hit hard along the defensive line by graduation and the early defection of Nick Fairley to the NFL, but that doesn't mean the talent cupboard is bare up front.

Nosa Eguae is the line's lone retuning starter and an emerging star. He's in his third season at Auburn but is just a sophomore. Eguae isn't the biggest defensive end in the league, but he gives it his all on every play and excels in backside pursuit.

"I'm not going to be the biggest defensive end in the SEC — I'm only 6-2, 260 — or the fastest defensive end in the SEC, but one thing I can stand out doing is giving effort," Eguae said.

"And that's the thing everybody sees, especially in football. So I'm going to go out their and play the game 100 miles per hour."

Joining Eguae up front will be fellow sophomores Jeffrey Whitaker, Kenneth Carter and Corey Lemonier. Whitaker and Carter offer good size and strength

Nosa Eguae
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Barrett Trotter	Jr.	Athletic, throws the deep ball well.	Clint Moseley, So.
RB	Michael Dyer*	So.	One of the best tailbacks in the nation.	Onterio McCalebb, Jr.
HB	Philip Lutzenkirchen*	Jr.	Versatile player has best hands on team; leader.	Cameron Groce, Fr.
WR	Quindarius Carr	Sr.	Had three catches in '10, but two went for TDs.	Travante Stallworth, Jr.
WR	Emory Blake*	Jr.	Team's top WR is a home-run hitter, good blocker.	Quan Bray, Fr.
WR	DeAngelo Benton	Jr.	Has star qualities, but is still unproven; big target.	Trovon Reed, Fr.
LT	A.J. Green	Sr.	Brings much-needed experience to line.	Chad Slade, Fr.
LG	Jared Cooper	Sr.	Finally gets a shot to start after five-year wait.	Eric Mack, Fr.
C	Blake Burgess	So.	Former walk-on has worked way into lineup.	Reese Dismukes, Fr.
RG	John Sullen	Jr.	Has size (6-6, 336) and experience; adept at pulling.	Tunde Fariyike, Fr.
RT	Brandon Mosley*	Sr.	Good athlete is team's lone returning OL starter.	Aubrey Phillips, Fr.
K	Chandler Brooks	Sr.	Brooks and Parkey are in battle for No.1 job.	Cody Parkey, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Corey Lemonier	So.	Tremendous pass rusher poised for big season.	Dee Ford, Jr.
DT	Jeffrey Whitaker	So.	Has the skill set to be Auburn's next great D-tackle.	Jamar Travis, Jr.
DT	Kenneth Carter	So.	Has good size (6-5, 287), quickness for young DT.	Derrick Lykes, Jr.
DE	Nosa Eguae*	So.	Gives 100 percent every play; good pass rusher.	Craig Sanders, So.
LB	Daren Bates*	Jr.	Physical striker who causes turnovers.	LaDarius Owens, Fr.
LB	Jake Holland	So.	Athletic youngster is new QB of the defense.	Harris Gaston, So.
LB	Jonathan Evans	Jr.	Experienced player had good spring.	Eltoro Freeman, Sr.
CB	T'Sharvan Bell*	Jr.	Solid cover-corner; ball-hawk; veteran.	Jonathan Rose, Fr.
CB	Chris Davis	So.	Good athlete played in every game as a freshman.	Jonathon Mincy, Fr.
SS	Neiko Thorpe*	Sr.	Moved from cornerback to safety; good tackler.	Drew Cole, Sr.
FS	Demetruce McNeal	So.	Still maturing; good tackler and pass defender.	Erique Florence, Fr.
P	Steven Clark	So.	Big punter (6-5, 228) has strong leg.	Chandler Brooks, Sr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Reese Dismukes
Auburn has an opening at center; Dismukes was rated as the country's top center prospect for the Class of 2011. Translation: Dismukes is likely to see a good bit of playing time this fall for the Tigers. He was an early enrollee, and that should help with his transition to college.

Kiehl Frazier
With Auburn having lost its Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, Cameron Newton, early to the NFL, the Tigers have an opening. Frazier did not early enroll, but still could be in the mix for that spot. Among dual-threat quarterbacks in his class, few, if any, have his overall abilities.

Kris Frost
Frost probably is the best overall athlete in Auburn's 2011 recruiting class. The only question is, at which position will he start his Tigers career? Frost said he intends to give receiver a shot first, but most believe linebacker is the best place for him to utilize his vast potential.

THE SLEEPER

Justin Garrett
In Auburn's highly rated class, Garrett didn't garner much attention from the media. But he has the potential to become an excellent player for the Tigers. A light (he played at 185 pounds in 2010) linebacker, Garrett has great speed and terrific instincts. He also knows how to lay a fierce hit.

Committments	24
Average Stars	3.63
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	13
★★★☆☆	10
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	87
National Rank: 7	SEC: 4

2012 NEEDS: Auburn is a young team but nonetheless has some areas it needs to address. Even after landing a strong class of offensive linemen in February, that remains a position the Tigers would like to restock. In fact, it wouldn't be a shock at all if Auburn went out and signed five or six players there. The Tigers also need running backs, where they seemingly do well each year. It looks as if Auburn's plan right now is to sign two tailbacks and a fullback.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Angelo Blackson	DT	6-5	290	★★★	Bear, DE	Red Lion Christian Academy
Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Delaware by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 defensive tackle...Participated in NUC All-World Bowl.						
Quan Bray	RB	5-11	178	★★★★	Lagrange, GA	Troup
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 5 all-purpose back...Participated in Under Armour All-American Bowl....Rushed for 1,300 yards as a senior.						
Sammie Coates	WR	6-3	170	★★★	Leroy, AL	Leroy
Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 71 wide receiver...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Caught 57 passes for 1,170 yards and 14 touchdowns as a senior.						
Jaylon Denson	WR	6-3	190	★★★★	Hoover, AL	Hoover
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 24 wide receiver... Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Caught 63 passes for 1,059 yards and 12 touchdowns as a senior.						
Reese Dismukes	OL	6-4	287	★★★★	Spanish Fort, AL	Spanish Fort
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 1 offensive center... Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic... Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Auburn in January.						
Erique Florence	DB	6-2	181	★★★★	Valley, AL	Valley
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 3 safety... Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
Kiehl Frazier	QB	6-3	212	★★★★	Springdale, AR	Shiloh Christian
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Arkansas...Rated as the nation's No. 5 dual-threat quarterback...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
Kris Frost	LB	6-3	210	★★★★★	Matthews, NC	Butler
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in North Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 2 outside linebacker...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl... Participated in Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
Brandon Fulse	TE	6-4	247	★★★★	Fort Meade, FL	Fort Meade
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 29 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 10 tight end...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
Justin Garrett	LB	6-2	185	★★★	Tucker, GA	Tucker
Rated as the No. 66 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Recorded 70 tackles and four sacks as a senior.						
Keymiya Harrell	DE	6-5	235	★★★	Plantersville, AL	Dallas County
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 weakside defensive end...Participated in the NUC All-World Gridiron Classic.						
Chris Landrum	LB	6-2	215	★★★	Sweet Water, AL	Sweet Water
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 48 outside linebacker...Earned MVP honors in 2010 state title game.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Tre Mason	RB	5-10	190	★★★★	Lake Worth, FL	Park Vista
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 32 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 14 running back...Rushed for 1,643 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior.						
JaBrian Niles	DE	6-2	270	★★★	Mobile, AL	Davidson
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 strongside defensive end...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Thomas O'Reilly	OL	6-3	313	★★★	Marietta, GA	Pope
Rated as the No. 64 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 43 offensive guard...Enrolled at Auburn in January.						
Greg Robinson	OL	6-5	296	★★★★	Thibodaux, LA	Thibodaux
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 2 offensive guard...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Jonathan Rose	DB	6-2	170	★★★★	Leeds, AL	Leeds
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Alabama...Rated as the nation's No. 7 safety...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Enrolled at Auburn in January.						
Devaunte Sigler	LB	6-4	250	★★★	Mobile, AL	B. C. Rain
Rated as the No. 23 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 64 outside linebacker...Had 80 tackles with five tackles for loss as a senior.						
Anthony Swain	DB	6-3	215	★★★	Gadsden, AL	Gadsden City
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 safety... Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Robenson Therezie	DB	5-10	180	★★★★	Miami, FL	Jackson
Rated as the No. 37 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 17 safety...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
C.J. Uzomah	TE	6-5	230	★★★	Suwannee, GA	North Gwinnett
Rated as the No. 23 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 20 tight end...Participated in the GACA All-Star Classic.						
Christian Westerman	OL	6-5	288	★★★★	Chandler, AZ	Hamilton
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Arizona...Rated as the nation's No. 3 offensive tackle...Chose Auburn over Texas.						
Jermaine Whitehead	DB	6-0	183	★★★★	Greenwood, MS	Amanda Elzy
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 cornerback...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Gabe Wright	DT	6-3	273	★★★★	Columbus, GA	Carver
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 13 defensive tackle...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
25	Daren Bates	LB	5-11	201	Jr.	Memphis, TN
22	T'Sharvan Bell	DB	6-0	182	Jr.	Kissimmee, FL
3	DeAngelo Benton	WR	6-2	207	Jr.	Bastrop, LA
	Angelo Blackson	DL	6-5	295	Fr.	Bear, DE
80	Emory Blake	WR	6-1	197	Jr.	Austin, TX
91	Joel Bonomolo	DE	6-3	237	Jr.	Metairie, LA
	Quan Bray	ATH	5-10	170	Fr.	LaGrange, GA
29	Chandler Brooks	K	6-0	180	Sr.	Huntsville
87	Sam Brown	DB	6-1	217	Sr.	Birmingham
82	Xavier Brown	WR	6-2	213	So.	Lawrenceville, GA
63	Blake Burgess	OL	6-2	273	So.	Vestavia Hills
47	Joey Caldwell	LB	6-1	236	Jr.	Five Points
9	Quindarius Carr	WR	6-1	180	Sr.	Huntsville
92	Kenneth Carter	DT	6-5	287	So.	Greenville
68	Ed Christian	OL	6-4	277	Fr.	Valdosta, GA
30	Steven Clark	P	6-5	228	So.	Kansas City, MO
	Sammie Coates	WR	6-3	180	Fr.	Leroy
20	Drew Cole	DB	5-11	190	Sr.	Picayune, MS
70	Shon Coleman	OL	6-6	275	Fr.	Olive Branch, MS
79	Jared Cooper	OL	6-4	298	Sr.	Brewton
33	Jessel Curry	LB	6-1	214	So.	Buford, GA
11	Chris Davis	CB	5-10	192	So.	Birmingham
52	Justin Delaine	DE	6-5	236	Fr.	Linden
	Jaylon Denson	WR	6-3	190	Fr.	Hoover
50	Reese Dismukes	C	6-3	290	Fr.	Spanish Fort
48	Jake Drum	WR	6-5	215	Jr.	Hoover
5	Michael Dyer	RB	5-9	206	So.	Little Rock, AR
94	Nosa Eguae	DE	6-2	255	So.	Mansfield, TX
35	Jonathan Evans	LB	5-11	225	Jr.	Prichard
65	Tunde Fariyike	OL	6-2	302	Fr.	Thomaston, GA
31	Trent Fisher	DB	6-0	189	Fr.	Nashville, TN
	Erique Florence	S	6-2	190	Fr.	Valley
95	Dee Ford	DE	6-4	233	Jr.	Odenville
	Kiehl Frazier	QB	6-3	210	Fr.	Springdale, AR
84	Codey Frederick	WR	6-4	199	Fr.	Hamilton
21	Eltoro Freeman	LB	5-11	224	Sr.	Alexander City
	Kris Frost	ATH	6-2	215	Fr.	Matthews, NC
	Brandon Fulse	TE	6-5	252	Fr.	Fort Meade, FL
	Justin Garrett	LB	6-2	200	Fr.	Tucker, GA
58	Harris Gaston	LB	6-1	234	So.	Birmingham
77	A.J. Greene	OL	6-5	298	Sr.	Madison, TN
83	Cameron Groce	TE	6-3	227	Fr.	Gardendale
	Keymiya Harrell	DE	6-5	235	Fr.	Plantersville
61	Josh Harris	DS	6-1	233	Sr.	Carrollton, GA
64	Forrest Hill	DS	6-1	236	Fr.	Morrow, GA
5	Jake Holland	LB	6-0	232	So.	Pelham
45	Davis Hooper	RB	6-0	209	Sr.	Montgomery
40	Chris Humphries	RB	6-2	224	Sr.	Somerville
67	Bobby Ingalls	OL	6-7	331	Sr.	Gardendale
	Chris Landrum	LB	6-3	235	Fr.	Sweet Water
65	Jake Lembke	DS	6-0	238	So.	New Lenox, IL
55	Corey Lemonier	DE	6-4	229	So.	Hialeah, FL
43	Philip Lutzenkirchen	TE	6-4	253	Jr.	Marietta, GA
97	Derrick Lykes	DL	6-2	286	Jr.	Clanton
44	Patrick Lymon	RB	5-10	176	Fr.	Harvest
41	Anderson Mack	WR	5-11	189	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
60	Eric Mack	OL	6-3	330	Fr.	St. Matthews, SC
	Tre Mason	RB	5-10	190	Fr.	Lake Worth, FL
23	Onterio McCalebb	RB	5-10	172	Jr.	Fort Meade, FL
12	Demetruce McNeal	DB	6-1	188	So.	College Park, GA
16	Ikeem Means	DB	6-0	209	Jr.	Wetumpka
6	Jonathon Mincy	DB	5-10	186	Fr.	Decatur, GA
8	Anthony Morgan	RB	5-9	194	Jr.	Brantley
15	Clint Moseley	QB	6-3	223	So.	Leroy
75	Brandon Mosley	OL	6-6	306	Sr.	Jefferson, GA
	Jabrian Niles	DL	6-3	260	Fr.	Mobile
66	Thomas O'Reilly	OL	6-3	326	Fr.	Marietta, GA
86	Chris Otersen	TE	6-3	198	Sr.	Springfield, VA
10	LaDarius Owens	LB	6-2	242	Fr.	Bessemer
36	Cody Parkey	K	6-0	184	So.	Jupiter, FL
72	Andrew Parmer	OL	5-10	267	Jr.	Dalton, GA
18	Logan Paul	QB	6-0	184	Fr.	Gulf Shores
78	Aubrey Phillips	OL	6-5	344	Fr.	Olive Branch, MS
37	Ladarious Phillips	FB	6-0	291	Fr.	Roanoke
69	Ryan Preston	OL	6-1	277	Fr.	Oxford
1	Trovon Reed	WR	6-0	188	Fr.	Thibodaux, LA
39	Dimitri Reese	WR	5-10	170	Fr.	Birmingham
56	Ashton Richardson	LB	6-0	190	Sr.	New Orleans, LA
61	Donnie Riggins	OL	6-8	304	Jr.	Wetumpka
	Gregory Robinson	OL	6-5	305	Fr.	Thibodaux, LA
28	Jonathan Rose	DB	6-2	185	Fr.	Leeds
13	Craig Sanders	DE	6-4	257	So.	Clio
64	Chase Seals	OL	6-7	282	Fr.	Auburn
42	Chandler Shakespeare	RB	5-10	197	So.	Oxford
	Devaunte Sigler	DL	6-4	255	Fr.	Mobile
62	Chad Slade	OL	6-5	329	Fr.	Moody
24	Ryan Smith	DB	6-1	200	So.	Cordova
40	Jordan Spriggs	DB	5-9	182	Fr.	Mobile
85	Travante Stallworth	WR	5-9	187	Jr.	Leesville, LA
71	John Sullen	OL	6-6	336	Jr.	Auburn
	Anthony Swain	S	6-2	205	Fr.	Gadsden
49	Nathan Taylor	WR	5-10	181	Sr.	Fredericksburg, VA
	Robenson Therezie	CB	5-10	195	Fr.	Miami, FL
15	Neiko Thorpe	DB	6-2	185	Sr.	Tucker, GA
74	Jamar Travis	DL	6-0	295	Jr.	Brewton
14	Barrett Trotter	QB	6-2	206	Jr.	Birmingham
	C.J. Uzomah	ATH	6-5	235	Fr.	Suwanee, GA
99	Brian Walsh	DL	6-3	307	Fr.	Winter Springs, FL
	Christian Westerman	OL	6-5	285	Fr.	Chandler, AZ
59	Jacob Westrich	LB	6-1	219	Fr.	Huntsville
54	Jeffrey Whitaker	DT	6-3	310	So.	Warner Robins, GA
38	Jawara White	LB	6-1	244	Fr.	Troy
19	Ryan White	DB	5-10	195	So.	Tallahassee, FL
	Jermaine Whitehead	CB	6-0	187	Fr.	Greenwood, MS
	Gabe Wright	DL	6-4	310	Fr.	Columbus, GA

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
Cam Newton	14	182.05	185	280	7	66.1	2854	30	94	203.9
Barrett Trotter	6	126.40	6	9	0	66.7	64	0	16	10.7

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
Darvin Adams	14	52	963	18.5	7	62	68.8
Terrell Zachery	14	43	605	14.1	4	80	43.2
Emory Blake	14	33	554	16.8	8	94	39.6

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
Cam Newton	14	264	1662	189	1473	5.6	20	71	105.2
Michael Dyer	14	182	1106	13	1093	6.0	5	38	78.1
Onterio McCalebb	14	95	850	40	810	8.5	9	70	57.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Bynes 73, Z. Etheridge 69, N. Thorpe 64
Tackles for loss: N. Fairley 24, A. Carter 11, Z. Clayton 8
Sacks: N. Fairley 11.5, A. Carter 4.5, N. Eguae 3.5
Interceptions: J. Bynes 3, Z. Etheridge 3, D. Washington 3

NOTEBOOK

Every Auburn fan wants to know who will be the team's signal-caller, but one thing's for sure: there won't be a two-quarterback system.

"I have never had a two-quarterback system," coordinator **Gus Malzahn** said.

"We're going to be committed to one guy once we make that decision. We will play a wildcat guy from time-to-time, but I really believe you've got to go with one guy, stand behind him and give him the majority of the reps."

Speaking of the wildcat, look for Malzahn to run more of it this year. Last year he didn't need to with Cam Newton in the backfield. Some candidates to see time as the wildcat QB include wideouts **Trovon Reed** and **Travante Stallworth**. Another guy to keep an eye on will be true freshman **Quan Bray**.

• Malzahn lauded the quarterbacks and offensive guard **John Sullen** for their spring play.

• **Blake Burgess** said offensive line coach **Jeff Grimes** will play the five toughest linemen regardless of class. Burgess has taken freshman **Reese Dismukes** under his wing and is showing him the ropes.

• **Nosa Eguae** on defensive line coach **Mike Pelton**: "He's so detail-oriented. And that's what he looks for. Everybody wants to make that big play but (you have) to work on the details to get there. Things like getting your hands in the right place and your technique; the little things."

• In Auburn's A-Day Game, the defensive ends raised eyebrows. **Joel Bonomolo** recorded a team-high 6.5 tackles and two sacks; **Dee Ford** tallied three tackles and two sacks and **Corey Lemonier** added two tackles and a sack. Ford was named the game's Defensive MVP.

• **Philip Lutzenkirchen** was the Offensive MVP of A-Day. He caught four passes for 65 yards and a score. Lutzenkirchen, who spent time at receiver in the spring, is excited about an expanded role in Malzahn's offense this season. "It will give me an opportunity to catch the ball more and be out in space, which was what I did in high school all four years," he said.

• **Chandler Brooks** won the Specialty MVP award after nailing four field goals over 40 yards.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On last season's run:** "That kid (Cam Newton) was as good as I think I've ever played against — his talent level and speed and size and ability to do what he did. And they had probably the best offensive line in the country — five guys who worked together a number of years. … It's going to be hard to replace that offensive line and that quarterback."

• **On Auburn's coaches:** "It's a great tribute to Auburn's coaches that they were able to win the thing last year. They were probably the fourth- or fifth-most talented team in the league, but found a way to win games. "

• **On this season:** I don't know if they'll go 6-6, but I think Georgia, LSU, Alabama, Clemson and Arkansas will beat them. I'll put it this way, if Clemson beats them it'll be a tough year."

Daren Bates
Photo by RD Moore

inside at the two tackle spots. Lemonier, meanwhile, should pair with Eguae to form a formidable set of ends.

In addition to its talented young foursome up front, Auburn possesses quality depth in reserve. Junior end Dee Ford is one name to remember. Ford, like Eguae, isn't big, but he has a different gear coming off the edge. Starting corner T'Sharvan Bell noted Ford as a player who stood out to him during the spring.

Craig Sanders and Joel Bonomolo are two more pass rushers who should play a big role in Ted Roof's defense, which could employ a variety of looks on passing downs to take advantage of its array of rushers.

Sanders has a non-stop motor and is as agile as a 257-pounder can be. Bonomolo was a highly anticipated signee a year ago but redshirted for medical reasons.

True sophomore Jake Holland will be under the microscope, sliding into Josh Bynes' old spot at middle linebacker. He will be counted on to get his fellow mates lined up and has all the tools to be a star. Hard-hitting Daren Bates and either Jonathan Evans or Eltoro Freeman will man the outside linebacker positions, but talented freshman LaDarius Owens will also be in the mix.

Bell and veteran Neiko Thorpe should provide a calming influence over a secondary that's a work in progress.

Bell is a ball-hawk and the team's best cover man. Thorpe moved from corner to safety in the spring and made huge strides. Demetruce McNeal, a rangy athlete who likes contact, could surprise in his first year as a starter. He and corner Chris Davis are young players with great potential.

SPECIAL TEAMS

All-time leading scorer Wes Byrum's departure leaves a huge void at placekicker. Senior Chandler Brooks is one contender to replace Byrum, but Cody Parkey is also in the mix. Parkey was a highly touted kicker coming out of high school, but didn't play in the A-Day

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Michael Dyer

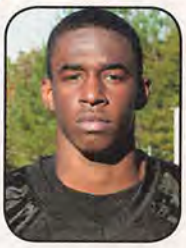
In his first year on the Plains, Dyer shattered the great Bo Jackson's freshman rushing record by rolling up 1,093 yards and five touchdowns on 182 carries. ... He also helped Auburn win the BCS title with his spectacular fourth-quarter run against Oregon that led to the eventual game-winning field goal. ... Gus Malzahn thinks Dyer is the best downhill runner in college football, so look for him to get the ball early and often. ... Averaged 6.0 yards per carry last year. ... Had only one catch in '10.

EMERGING STAR

DE Corey Lemonier

Lemonier was the No. 4 ranked player in Florida coming out of high school a year ago. He's a physically imposing athlete with tremendous pass-rushing ability. ... Totaled three tackles, including two for loss, and picked up first career sack in win over Louisiana-Monroe. Recorded three tackles, including one for a loss, in the BCS Championship Game win over Oregon. ... Finished the '10 campaign with 17 tackles, including five for loss, two sacks and four quarterback hurries. ... Has NFL-type talent.

TOP NEWCOMER



WR Quan Bray

Bray is an electrifying athlete from Georgia who could be an early contributor at receiver, the wildcat position and on special teams due to his game-breaking ability. He racked up 1,300 yards rushing and 300 yards receiving as a senior. As a junior, he had 2,128 yards of total offense and 28 touchdowns. ... Comes from a good high school program known for producing quality football players. ... Cousin of former Auburn defensive back Jason Bray, who played for the Tigers from 1995-98.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	17.3	110
Rushing	137.5	69
Passing	165.4	99
Total	302.9	104
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.0	14
Rushing	138.9	54
Passing	178.8	19
Total	317.8	29
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 8	- 0.67	100

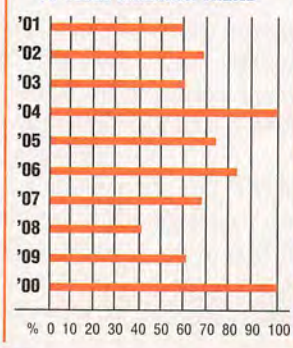
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	33.3	17
Rushing	212.0	13
Passing	219.8	56
Total	431.8	16
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.5	79
Rushing	156.1	78
Passing	218.0	57
Total	374.1	68
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	58

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	41.2	7
Rushing	284.8	5
Passing	214.4	66
Total	499.2	7
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.1	53
Rushing	109.1	9
Passing	259.3	108
Total	368.4	60
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.36	33

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

14-0, 8-0

W	ARKANSAS STATE	52-26
W	at Mississippi State	17-14
W	CLEMSON (OT)	27-24
W	SOUTH CAROLINA	35-27
W	LOUISIANA-MONROE	52-3
W	at Kentucky	37-34
W	ARKANSAS	65-43
W	LSU	24-17
W	at Ole Miss	51-31
W	TENNESSEE-CHATTANOOGA	62-24
W	GEORGIA	49-31
W	at Alabama	28-27
	SEC Championship Game	
W	vs South Carolina	56-17
	BCS National Championship Game	
W	vs. Oregon	22-19

PLAYER PROFILE

Philip Lutzenkirchen
Photo by Jonathan Ferrey/Getty Images

Fans Remember 'The Dance;' He Remembers a Friend

These days, Philip Lutzenkirchen is something of a folk hero at Auburn.

Every time he catches a pass, the crowd in Jordan-Hare Stadium yells, "L-U-T-Z." He has the cool name. He's one of the top playmakers on the team. And every day he walks around campus he's reminded about the play he scored on to beat arch-rival Alabama in last year's Iron Bowl.

Not because he scored the touchdown, but for his tap dance following the touchdown.

"Every day. Every single day," said Lutzenkirchen, a communications major.

"We'll go hang out somewhere and someone will say, 'Hey Lutz, can you teach us the dance?' It wasn't planned; it was embarrassing. But that will probably be what I'll be remembered for during my four years at Auburn."

Maybe so, but the play, called "Five Delay," will forever go down in Auburn lore. Not only did it cap the greatest comeback in Tiger history, but it exemplified the confidence Gus Malzahn and Gene Chizik have in Lutzenkirchen's abilities during crunch time.

"I'm always in Malzahn's ear saying, 'Let's run this play, this play,' and he's always like, 'No, we'll wait for it,'" Lutzenkirchen said.

"But finally in the one of the biggest games of our careers, the biggest comeback win ever, we just lined up, faked Cam rolling to the right, I faked the block, released left. The defense wasn't ready for it and Cam just popped it to me."

But in the midst of all the excitement following Lutzenkirchen's score, most all watching on television and at Bryant-Denny missed the one thing the means a lot to him — his point to the heavens. After every score, Lutzenkirchen directs one finger to the sky to honor a friend he lost in high school. It's his way of keeping his memory alive.

"One of my teammates and really good buddies (Kevin Metzer) from high school passed away from cancer. We'd walk out of the tunnel in high school together, very last in line, so I point up to him whenever I score because I know he's watching over me."

For Kevin, and for Tiger fans, Lutzenkirchen hopes to put that finger in the air a few more times before he leaves the Plains. He also wants to become the nation's best tight end.

"I really want to win that Mackey Award and be known as one of the greatest tight ends to ever play here."

Game. Brooks did, however, and hit 3 of 5 field goal attempts — including a long of 48 yards.

The Tigers feel good about Steven Clark nailing down the punting duties. He averaged 47.2 yards per kick during the spring game and drew a big ovation when he booted a 68-yarder in the second quarter.

Trovon Reed is the favorite to be the team's primary punt returner. Reed and Onterio McCalebb, Auburn's top kick returner, should give coverage units fits with their speed.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Auburn should have no problem in its home opener against Utah State, but a tough division game against Mississippi State will test the Tigers' mettle the following week. The Bulldogs are considered a player in the West.

In Week Three, Auburn heads to Clemson after the teams played a thriller in Jordan-Hare Stadium a year ago.

Following a home game against Howard Schnellenberger's Florida Atlantic squad, the schedule becomes daunting. The Tigers play South Carolina and Arkansas on the road, host Florida, travel to Baton Rouge to take on LSU and then return home to play Ole Miss in consecutive weeks.

After a bye, Auburn takes on Georgia. It will then wrap up its season with home games against Samford and arch-rival Alabama.

— Matt Lowe

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	UTAH STATE	4-8
Sept. 10	MISSISSIPPI STATE	9-4
Sept. 17	at Clemson	6-7
Sept. 24	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	4-8
Oct. 1	at South Carolina	9-5
Oct. 8	at Arkansas	10-3
Oct. 15	FLORIDA	8-5
Oct. 22	at LSU	11-2
Oct. 29	OLE MISS	4-8
Nov. 12	at Georgia	6-7
Nov. 19	SAMFORD	4-7
Nov. 26	ALABAMA	10-3

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Charlie Weis | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dan Quinn** | **STADIUM: Ben Hill Griffin: 88,548**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
8-5, 4-4 SEC (2nd, East)

COACH:
Will Muschamp, 1st season as a head coach

RETURNING STARTERS:
7; 4 offense, 2 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB John Brantley, RB Jeff Demps, RB Chris Rainey, TE Jordan Reed, DE/LB Ronald Powell, LB Jelani Jenkins, S Matt Elam

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The biggest plus is Brantley is now in a system that fits his skill set as a pro-style, drop-back passer. The Gators also have plenty of options at running back, and Reed is a potential star at tight end. The linebackers are an athletic group that have no trouble in a 4-3 or a 3-4.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Can UF generate a pass rush? The Gators had a hard time pressuring the quarterback last season and the defense couldn't get off the field. There are few proven playmakers on defense. The receivers don't scare anybody. It's a good coaching staff, but how does Muschamp handle his first head coaching job?

KEY LOSSES:
C Mike Pouncey, SS Ahmad Black, S Will Hill, P Chas Henry, CB Janoris Jenkins

OVERVIEW:
Rebounding from a disappointing season won't be easy with a new coaching staff, new offensive and defensive systems, and very few experienced players. Plus, the schedule is brutal: home games against Alabama and Florida State and road games at Auburn and LSU. The good news is that the Gators are as good as anyone in the East Division outside of South Carolina.

New Coach, New Systems for Inexperienced Gators

The first public look at Florida's new offense did not leave a very good impression.

The pro-style attack that new offensive coordinator Charlie Weis brought with him from the Kansas City Chiefs (and Notre Dame and the New England Patriots) was supposed to be the perfect fit for senior quarterback John Brantley.

After a year floundering in Urban Meyer's spread option offense, Brantley seemed poised to flourish under Weis and produce like he did in high school when he threw a Florida state record 99 touchdown passes at Ocala Trinity Catholic.

Instead, Brantley stumbled in UF's spring game, completing just 4 of 14 passes for 45 yards.

First-year head coach Will Muschamp is not concerned.

"If we started the season today, John Brantley would be our starter," Muschamp said.

"He's experienced. He's got talent. John's had a very good spring and he's close to 70 percent completion percentage from the spring — we tally every throw — so I'm very pleased with how he's managing our football team.

"He's picked up our offense. He does a great job at the line of scrimmage. I'm pleased with Johnny."

Brantley also brushed off his poor performance after getting outplayed by backups Tyler Murphy and Jeff Driskel.

"It's just another practice, just another opportunity for us to go out there and get better," Brantley said. "We've had a good spring. We've progressed very well."

Granted, Brantley was without three starting offensive linemen and three receivers, but the poor showing — and the fact that Muschamp challenged him in front of the team to be a better leader — has led to legitimate questions about whether Brantley is the Gators' best option at quarterback.

Brantley was so ineffective last year that the Gators rotated him with Trey Burton and Jordan Reed, but the theory was Brantley should be much better in Weis' pro-style attack because he's a classic drop-back passer.

"Fortunately for him, with what he does the best, what he does the best athletically, it fits with what I like to do," Weis said.

"Now, that doesn't guarantee him a spot, but it gives him an upper hand with the experience that he has now fitting into an offense that fits what he does. I think that gives him a pretty good chance (to be successful)."

OFFENSE

Urban Meyer's spread-option offense, which won two national titles and helped Tim Tebow win a Heisman Trophy, was a mess in 2010. It's being replaced with a pro-style attack, led by new offensive coordinator Charlie Weis, and the reception from the players has been positive.

"Lot of excitement. Lot of big plays," redshirt senior running back Chris Rainey said. "Lot more people involved. Just a lot of fun.

"Fans are going to be happy again."

Only if the quarterback situation clears up by the Sept. 3 opener against Florida Atlantic.

John Brantley's advantage over Tyler Murphy, Jeff Driskel and Jacoby Brissett is experience. He started every game last season but led UF to an 8-5 record and threw for just 2,061 yards (158.5 per game) to go along with nine touchdowns and 10 interceptions.

Driskell, who enrolled in January, is the most talented of the group, but he's

Jeff Demps
Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

raw. Murphy is a redshirt freshman. Brissett arrives on campus in July.

There's no uncertainty at running back, though.

Rainey handled nearly all the carries in spring practice because of injuries to sophomore Mack Brown (broken fibula), junior Mike Gillislee (stress fracture in his foot) and freshman Mike Blakely (shoulder) ... and the fact that senior Jeff Demps was running track. Rainey, who has rushed for 1,521 yards and 11 touchdowns in his career, is the likely starter.

Demps, an Olympic-caliber sprinter who won another NCAA national indoor title in the 100 meters in the spring, led UF in rushing last season with 551 yards despite carrying the ball only 92 times in 11 games. He will be used less inside the tackles.

The projected starting line has only 20 combined starts, seven by redshirt sophomore right guard Jon Halapio and 13 by junior right tackle Xavier Nixon. Redshirt sophomore center Nick Alajajian, sophomore left guard Ian Silberman and redshirt junior left tackle Matt Patchan, whose career has been derailed by injuries, round out the unit.

Trey Burton will be the fullback, and he's one of UF's most versatile players. Weis is tinkering with ways to get the sophomore the ball even more.

The tight end figures prominently in Weis' offense, and the Gators have a potential All-SEC player in 6-3, 240-pound Jordan Reed. Early enrollee A.C. Leonard is another big target with good speed who will earn playing time.

The receivers have so far proven to be average.

Redshirt juniors Frankie Hammond Jr. (26 career receptions) and Omarius Hines (34 career receptions) have been the most consistent, while sophomore Quinton Dunbar has shown flashes of being a downfield threat.

Senior Deonte Thompson, last season's leading receiver with 38 catches, has fallen to fourth on the depth chart and might drop behind sophomore Andre Debose, who has similar speed but better hands.

DEFENSE

New coordinator Dan Quinn likes to flop between a 4-3 and 3-4, and that has created a new position in Gainesville. Quinn calls it the "Buck," and it's a hybrid outside linebacker/defensive end role that he said fits sophomore Ronald Powell perfectly.

"It's really a unique position," Quinn said. "A guy that can stand up and drop into coverage, rush, cover a tight end. It's a fun position to play. You're looking for a guy who has got speed and length and has the ability to play in space with receivers as well."

The 6-4, 250-pound Powell, who came to UF in 2010 as the nation's

John Brantley
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	John Brantley*	Sr.	His skills a better fit for Charlie Weis' offense.	Tyler Murphy, Fr.
RB	Chris Rainey	Sr.	Had a great spring after moving back from WR.	Jeff Demps, Sr.
FB	Trey Burton*	So.	Second in receptions, third in rushing in 2010.	Hunter Joyer, Fr.
WR	Frankie Hammond, Jr.	Jr.	Team's most consistent receiver in the spring.	Quinton Dunbar, So.
WR	Omarius Hines	Jr.	Big target who runs well after the catch.	Andre Debose, So.
TE	Jordan Reed	So.	He's a full-time TE; blocking still needs work.	A.C. Leonard, Fr.
LT	Matt Patchan	Jr.	Injuries have limited him to just 15 career games.	Chaz Green, Fr.
LG	Ian Silberman	So.	He played in just one game last season.	David Young, Jr.
C	Nick Alajajian	So.	Has only seen spot action at tackle.	Jonotthan Harrison, So.
RG	Jon Halapio*	So.	Gators' d-linemen raved about him in the spring.	James Wilson, Sr.
RT	Xavier Nixon*	Jr.	UF's most experienced lineman (13 starts).	Kyle Koehne, So.
K	Caleb Sturgis*	Jr.	Returning from stress fracture in his back.	Brad Phillips, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ronald Powell	So.	Came on late and totaled 25 tackles.	Lerentee McCray, Jr.
DT	Dominique Easley	So.	Made four tackles in six games last season.	Jaye Howard, Sr.
DT	Sharrif Floyd	So.	Staff hoping he can provide inside pass rush.	Omar Hunter, Jr.
DE	William Green	Sr.	A career underachiever facing his last chance.	Chris Martin, Fr.
LB	Gerald Christian	So.	Former TE shot up depth chart in spring.	Kedric Johnson, So.
LB	Jon Bostic*	Jr.	Inconsistent but flashed big-play potential.	Michael Taylor, Fr.
LB	Jelani Jenkins*	So.	Made 76 tackles in first season as a starter.	Dee Finley, Jr.
CB	Moses Jenkins	Sr.	NCAA granted him a sixth year after arm injury.	Cody Riggs, So.
CB	Jeremy Brown	Jr.	Missed two years with back injury.	De'Ante Saunders, Fr.
SS	Matt Elam	So.	UF's most impressive freshman last season.	Joshua Shaw, So.
FS	Josh Evans	Jr.	Solid player ... but so far not a playmaker.	Marcus Roberson, Fr.
P	Kyle Christy	Fr.	Good hang time is his best asset.	David Lerner, Jr.

*Returning Starter

GATORS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Mike Blakely
One of the country's most sought-after tailbacks, Blakely has a chance to earn early playing time. Though only 5-9, he weighs 194 pounds. He not only is fast, but shifty. He also runs extremely hard. Blakely enrolled early but missed the spring with a shoulder injury. He should be healthy by the fall.

Jeff Driskel
With Florida being shaky at quarterback (inconsistent starter John Brantley returns), the nation's top-rated signal-caller for 2011 has a chance to get some action, and possibly even start should Brantley stumble. Driskel is a big, strong player who runs well and has great arm strength. But how quickly can he pick up the system?

A.C. Leonard
A top-100 national recruit, Leonard should give the Gators a boost at tight end. Although he probably won't start, he'll likely see the field early and often. For a player his size, Leonard moves extremely well and has great hands. Florida also will need him to block, and that's an area he needs to improve.

THE SLEEPER

Clay Burton
The younger brother of Florida's do-it-all sophomore Trey Burton, Clay is a defensive end with a tremendous upside. Burton has a quick first step and great balance. For a player his age, he's already pretty technically sound. With improved strength, he could contribute early.

Committments	19
Average Stars	3.58
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	11
★★★☆☆	8
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	68
National Rank: 12	SEC: 5

2012 NEEDS: The Gators have several needs, but the offensive line is the area that stands out. There, Florida hopes to sign five or more players, many of whom are likely to be tackles. The Gators aren't particularly deep on the line so adding depth is crucial, and they are after several big-name targets. The defensive line is another spot where Florida hopes to do well this recruiting cycle. In the SEC, a team can never have enough good tackles, and Florida is working hard to build up at that spot.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Mike Blakely	RB	5-9	194	✪✪✪✪	Bradenton, FL	Manatee

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 6 running back...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Jacoby Brissett	QB	6-5	225	✪✪✪✪	West Palm Beach, FL	Dwyer

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 3 dual-threat quarterback...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Chose Florida over Miami.

Clay Burton	DE	6-3	230	✪✪✪	Venice, FL	Venice

Rated as the No. 78 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 weakside defensive end...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl... Enrolled at Florida in January.

Kyle Christy	K	6-2	175	✪✪✪	Brownsburg, IN	Brownsburg

Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 3 kicker...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Jeff Driskel	QB	6-3	225	✪✪✪✪	Oviedo, FL	Hagerty

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 1 pro-style quarterback...Threw for 1,819 yards and 15 touchdowns, rushed for 1,333 yards and 20 scores as a senior...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Jabari Gorman	DB	5-11	170	✪✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Monsignor Pace

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 30 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 10 safety...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Chose Florida over Miami and Ohio State.

Chris Johnson	DB	5-10	186	✪✪✪	Ocala, FL	Trinity Catholic

Rated as the No. 94 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Chose Florida over Louisville, Memphis, South Carolina and Vanderbilt.

Tommy Jordan	OL	6-5	280	✪✪✪	Ridgefield, CT	Ridgefield

Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Connecticut by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 57 offensive tackle...Chose Florida over Boston College, California, Duke, Rutgers and Wisconsin.

Hunter Joyer	RB	6-0	245	✪✪✪	Wesley Chapel, FL	Wesley Chapel

Rated as the No. 93 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 1 fullback...Chose Florida over UConn, Louisville, Miami, USF, Stanford and Texas A&M.

A.C. Leonard	TE	6-2	232	✪✪✪✪	Jacksonville, FL	Univ. Christian School

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 5 tight end...Averaged 20 yards per catch on offense and had 21 sacks on defense as a senior...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Javares McRoy	WR	5-9	170	✪✪✪✪	Lakeland, FL	Lakeland

Rated as the No. 39 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 28 wide receiver... Chose Florida over Auburn, California, Florida State, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio State, Tennessee and Texas Tech...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Louchiez Purifoy	DB	6-0	170	✪✪✪✪	Pensacola, FL	Pine Forest

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 11 cornerback...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl... Chose Florida over Alabama, Auburn and Miami.

Marcus Roberson	DB	6-1	170	✪✪✪✪	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	St. Thomas Aquinas

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 2 cornerback...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Chose Florida over Texas Tech, Auburn and USC.

De-Ante Saunders	DB	6-0	180	✪✪✪	Deland, FL	Deland

Rated as the No. 68 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 safety...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Florida in January.

Valdez Showers	DB	5-11	181	✪✪✪	Madison Heights, MI	Madison

Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 40 cornerback...Had three interceptions on defense and rushed for more than 2,000 yards on offense as a senior... Chose Florida over Auburn, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State and Wisconsin.

Graham Stewart	LB	6-1	216	✪✪✪✪	Middletown, CT	Xavier

Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Connecticut by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 inside linebacker...Led team to 13-0 record and state championship... Chose Florida over Boston College, UConn, Iowa, Syracuse and Temple.

Ja'Juan Story	WR	6-3	190	✪✪✪✪	Brooksville, FL	Nature Coast

Rated as the No. 45 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 wide receiver...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game... Chose Florida over Georgia, Ohio State, Oregon and USF.

Trip Thurman	OL	6-6	302	✪✪✪✪	Dover, DE	Dover

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Delaware...Rated as the nation's No. 13 offensive guard...Chose Florida over Boston College, South Carolina, Rutgers, Maryland and Clemson.

Tevin Westbrook	DE	6-5	260	✪✪✪	Coconut Creek, FL	North Broward

Rated as the No. 97 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 strongside defensive end... Also played basketball in high school... Chose Florida over UConn, North Carolina, Purdue and USF.

GATORS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Class	Hometown
25	Gideon Ajagbe	LB	6-3	212	Fr.	Coconut Grove
58	Nick Alajajian	C	6-4	295	So.	Naples
89	Stephen Alli	WR	6-5	220	So.	Toronto, ONT
48	Neiron Ball	LB	6-2	222	So.	Jackson, GA
38	Phillip Bellino	RB	5-11	195	So.	Boca Raton
31	Brian Biada	CB	5-8	170	Fr.	Naples
30	Mike Blakely	RB	5-9	198	Fr.	Bradenton
52	Jonathan Bostic	LB	6-1	238	Jr.	Wellington
12	John Brantley	QB	6-3	220	Sr.	Ocala
8	Jeremy Brown	CB	5-10	184	Jr.	Orlando
33	Mack Brown	RB	5-10	193	So.	Lithonia, GA
98	Zack Brust	K	6-1	168	Sr.	Jacksonville
86	Clay Burton	DE/LB	6-4	234	Fr.	Venice
8	Trey Burton	RB	6-2	222	So.	Venice
14	Chandler Carr	QB	5-11	207	So.	Ponte Vedra Beach
42	Blake Castillo	RB	5-3	147	Fr.	Orlando
32	Gerald Christian	LB	6-3	232	So.	Palm Beach Gardens
41	Kyle Christy	P	6-3	189	Fr.	Brownsburg, IN
7	Robert Clark	WR	5-9	175	So.	Palm Beach Gardens
34	Tim Clark	S	5-10	184	So.	Wellborn
47	John Crofoot	K	5-11	150	So.	Windemere
4	Andre Debose	WR	5-11	180	So.	Sanford
2	Jeffery Demps	RB	5-8	181	Sr.	Winter Garden
44	Jonathan Dornbush	FB/LB	6-0	210	Jr.	Ocala
16	Jeff Driskel	QB	6-4	238	Fr.	Oviedo
84	Quinton Dunbar	WR	6-1	170	So.	Miami
27	Chris Dunkley	WR	6-0	172	Fr.	Pahokee
58	Dominique Easley	DT	6-2	278	So.	Staten Island, NY
22	Matt Elam	S	5-10	199	So.	Palm Beach Gardens
24	Josh Evans	S	6-1	195	Jr.	Irvington, NJ
46	Drew Ferris	LS	6-1	207	Fr.	Carlsbad, CA
13	Dee Finley	LB	6-2	219	Jr.	Auburn, AL
73	Sharrif Floyd	DT	6-3	303	So.	Philadelphia, PA
62	Cole Gilliam	G	6-4	332	So.	Valrico
23	Mike Gillislee	RB	5-11	198	Jr.	DeLand
28	Deandre Goins	RB	5-11	176	So.	Dunedin
75	Chaz Green	T	6-5	289	Fr.	Tampa
96	William Green	DE	6-4	245	Sr.	Hoover, AL
54	Christopher Guido	LS	6-1	230	So.	Altamonte Springs
67	Jon Halapio	T/G	6-3	303	So.	St. Petersburg
85	Frankie Hammond, Jr.	WR	6-1	176	Jr.	Hollywood
50	Cody Hampton	LS	5-11	210	Jr.	St. Petersburg
45	David Harding	DB/WR	5-9	168	Fr.	Coral Springs
72	Jonotthan Harrison	G	6-3	300	So.	Groveland
82	Omarius Hines	WR	6-2	211	Jr.	Corsicana, TX
6	Jaye Howard	DT	6-3	302	Sr.	Apopka
99	Omar Hunter	NT	6-1	305	Jr.	Buford, GA
1	Janoris Jenkins	CB	5-10	183	Sr.	Pahokee
43	Jelani Jenkins	LB	6-1	223	So.	Olney, MD
36	Moses Jenkins	CB	6-3	182	Sr.	Ft. Lauderdale
93	Kedric Johnson	DE	6-4	225	So.	Palmetto
20	Malcolm Jones	DB	5-9	172	So.	Fleming Island
49	Darrin Kitchens	LB	6-2	218	So.	Homestead
64	Kyle Koehne	T	6-5	300	So.	Indianapolis, IN
81	A.C. Leonard	TE	6-4	245	Fr.	Jacksonville
40	David Lerner	P	6-0	199	Jr.	Gainesville
94	Gerry Marseille	DE/LB	6-2	222	So.	Miami
23	Chris Martin	DE	6-4	240	Fr.	Aurora, CO
34	Lerentee McCray	DE	6-2	241	Jr.	Ocala
88	Michael McFarland	TE	6-6	235	Fr.	Tampa
30	Michael McNeely	WR	5-8	165	Fr.	Clearwater
87	Javares McRoy	WR	5-9	159	Fr.	Lakeland
33	Minch Minchin	LB	6-2	192	Sr.	Gainesville
10	Tyler Murphy	QB	6-2	192	Fr.	Wethersfield, CT
73	Xavier Nixon	T	6-6	290	Jr.	Fayetteville, NC
91	Earl Okine	DT	6-7	282	Jr.	Gainesville
68	Leon Orr	DT	6-5	315	Fr.	New Port Richey
18	Ryan Parrish	QB	6-2	200	So.	Lakeland
71	Matt Patchan	T	6-6	292	Jr.	Tampa
83	Solomon Patton	WR	5-9	175	So.	Mobile, AL
53	Scott Peek	LB	6-2	214	Jr.	Tampa
97	Brad Phillips	K	5-10	178	So.	Gainesville
86	Josh Postell	TE	6-4	218	Jr.	Atlanta, GA
7	Ronald Powell	DE/LB	6-4	250	So.	Moreno Valley, CA
17	Christian Provancha	QB	6-6	206	So.	Cocoa
3	Chris Rainey	RB/WR	5-9	175	Sr.	Lakeland
11	Jordan Reed	TE	6-3	240	So.	New London, CT
31	Cody Riggs	CB	5-9	166	So.	Fort Lauderdale
50	Sam Robey	C	6-3	302	Jr.	Louisville, KY
37	Ben Sams	RB	5-11	203	So.	St. Petersburg
37	Brandon Sanders	CB	5-9	180	So.	Ocala
26	De'Ante Saunders	CB	5-8	173	Fr.	DeLand
35	Jesse Schmitt	FB	5-7	169	So.	Palm Beach Gardens
29	Solomon Schoonover	WR	6-3	209	Sr.	Aventura
9	Joshua Shaw	S	6-3	186	So.	Palmdale, CA
77	Ian Silberman	T	6-5	285	So.	Orange Park
60	William Steinmann	T	6-5	272	Sr.	Daytona Beach
19	Caleb Sturgis	K	5-11	191	Jr.	St. Augustine
95	Hygens Succes	LB	5-10	204	Jr.	Palm Beach
51	Michael Taylor	LB	6-0	217	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
6	Deonte Thompson	WR	6-0	200	Sr.	Belle Glade
85	Lynden Trail	DE	6-7	217	Fr.	Miami
95	Francisco Velez	WR	5-9	178	So.	Ocala
14	Jaylen Watkins	CB	5-11	183	So.	Cape Coral
66	James Wilson	G	6-4	324	Sr.	St. Augustine
78	David Young	G	6-4	304	Jr.	Edwardsville, IL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Brantley	13	116.36	200	329	10	60.8	2061	9	51	158.5
J. Reed	12	119.71	26	46	1	56.5	252	3	31	21.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Thompson	13	38	570	15.0	1	44	43.8
T. Burton	13	32	210	6.6	1	21	16.2
C. Moore	13	27	349	12.9	1	51	26.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Demps	11	92	591	40	551	6.0	3	72	50.1
C. Rainey	8	51	384	18	366	7.2	2	51	45.8
T. Burton	13	75	356	7	349	4.7	11	51	26.8

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A. Black 108, Je. Jenkins 76, J. Bostic 57
Tackles for loss: J. Trattou 12, J. Howard 12, A. Black 11
Sacks: D Lemmens 4, B. Hicks 3, J. Howard 3
Interceptions: A. Black 5, Ja. Jenkins 3, J. Brown 3

NOTEBOOK

Defensive end/linebacker **Ronald Powell** says Florida won't have a chemistry problem in 2011.

He's a pretty good source since he was part of the reason the Gators had one last season.

Powell and defensive tackles **Sharrif Floyd** and **Dominique Easley** were three of the nation's top defensive recruits a year ago, the cornerstone of the nation's top recruiting class. It was a class that arrived with a sense of entitlement and often clashed with the team's veterans.

Their attitude problem has been resolved, Powell said.

"The whole team is buying in and we welcome everyone that comes in," Powell said. "We're going to be together for a long time, so we might as well get it straight now."

Floyd said some of the freshmen thought they should be playing more and added that he and several others got caught up in their hype.

"It was a good season, but it wasn't the season we all predicted," Floyd said. "Right after the season, we all got on board and just wanted to do better."

• **Charlie Weis** said his family situation was the main reason he decided to leave the Kansas City Chiefs for Florida. Weis' wife was living with their special needs daughter in South Bend, Ind., and his son was getting ready to head off to college. Weis' son enrolled at UF, which makes it a bit easier than being in three spots.

"The fact that I can take care of my wife and my daughter and my son and kind of mesh everything together, it's really as simple an answer as that one," he said.

• Junior wide receiver **Frankie Hammond, Jr.,** is back on scholarship. Former UF head coach Urban Meyer took it away after Hammond's June 2010 arrest for driving under the influence, but new coach **Will Muschamp** gave it back in the spring. "I just worked my tail off," Hammond said.

• Sophomore linebacker **Neiron Ball's** football career is in limbo after he was hospitalized for a ruptured blood vessel in his brain in February. Muschamp said Ball, who underwent a medical procedure in March, will recover, but football is on hold.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Florida's projections:** "I look for them to have a big bounce back. Their coordinators will do a good job. It's a matter of the offense getting its confidence back. Defensively, they were good (last year). They lost their stroke on offense. They reminded me offensively of Tennessee in 2005 — they just couldn't get out of their own way."

• **On switching to a pro-style offense:** "I don't think it'll be difficult if they have a quarterback that can do it, if John Brantley hasn't lost all of his confidence. I thought he was really talented coming out of high school."

• **More on Brantley:** "The only thing worse than having a first-year starter at quarterback is having a second-year starter at quarterback who had a bad first year."

Ronald Powell
Photo by Joe Robbins/Getty Images

No. 1 overall recruit, was one of the Gators' most impressive players in the spring. He quickly adapted to the new role and is being counted on to improve UF's anemic pass rush from last season (21 sacks).

That pass rush is the biggest concern for the Gators in 2011. Senior defensive tackle Jaye Howard (5.5) is the only player on the roster with more than two career sacks, so there's plenty of opportunity for playmakers to emerge.

"You'll hear us say 'affecting the quarterback,' and sometimes it may not be just in the sack," Quinn said.

"There might be a day where you had two sacks, but you really hit the guy. There were 10 hits and three other batted balls, and that was a good game because you got the guy off his spot and affected the quarterback."

Senior William Green, who has not yet lived up to his potential, starts at end opposite Powell. Two sophomore defensive tackles — Dominique Easley and Sharrif Floyd — may be able to help pressure the passer up the middle.

The linebackers are a mix of experience (redshirt sophomore Jelani Jenkins and junior Jon Bostic) and newbies Powell and Gerald Christian, who moved from tight end in the spring.

The secondary was to be led by cornerback Janoris Jenkins, who was an All-SEC performer in 2010 despite playing nearly the entire season with a torn labrum in his right shoulder. He was kicked off the team in April after a second marijuana arrest.

That leaves sixth-year senior Moses Jenkins and Jeremy Brown. Moses Jenkins won the job last fall but suffered an elbow injury in the opener and missed the next seven games. The loss of Janoris Jenkins makes this an area of concern

Sophomore Matt Elam takes over for Ahmad Black at strong safety. Elam was a special teams standout last season, and the transition to starter and one of the defense's leaders was seamless in the spring.

Junior Josh Evans takes over for Will Hill at free safety and the hope is he can be more consistent than Hill, who made big plays but also disappeared in games.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Caleb Sturgis (24 of 34 field goals) is almost completely recovered from the stress fracture in his back that cost him the final eight games of the 2010 season.

He still has to limit the amount of work he does in the weight room,

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Chris Rainey

Able to run between the tackles despite his size (5-9, 175). ... He has rushed for 1,603 yards and 11 touchdowns in his career, averaging 7.1 yards per carry. ... After being suspended for five games last season, returned to the lineup against Georgia and accounted for 241 all-purpose yards, including rushing for 84 yards on a career-high 16 carries. Also returned six kickoffs for 148 yards. ... Should thrive in traditional running game under new coordinator Charlie Weis.

EMERGING STAR

TE Jordan Reed

Shared time at quarterback last season, running for 328 yards and five touchdowns and throwing for 252 yards and three scores. ... Also caught six passes for 79 yards. ... His size (6-3, 240) makes him hard to handle for defensive backs, and his speed makes him a matchup problem for linebackers. ... Charlie Weis' offense features the tight ends, so he should get plenty of work. He was targeted six times in spring game.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Ja'Juan Story

Story gives the Gators a big receiver (6-3, 190) with good speed (4.4 40-yard dash), something they didn't have last season. ... Picked UF over Ohio State. ... Very good with the ball after the catch and can run away from defenders. ... One of the top athletes in Florida, he ran for 847 yards, threw for 427 yards, and caught seven passes for 123 yards as a high school senior.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	45.15	3
Rushing	229.7	11
Passing	212.6	62
Total	442.4	17
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	12.9	4
Rushing	105.4	15
Passing	174.0	16
Total	279.3	8
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 22	+ 1.69	2

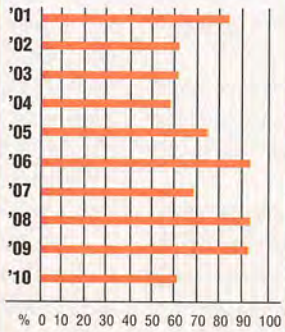
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	35.8	10
Rushing	221.8	10
Passing	236.1	41
Total	457.8	6
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	12.4	4
Rushing	99.8	12
Passing	152.8	2
Total	252.6	4
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.5	24

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.9	43
Rushing	166.5	44
Passing	184.3	88
Total	350.9	82
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.3	29
Rushing	130.6	31
Passing	175.9	12
Total	306.5	9
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.15	47

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

8-5, 4-4

W	MIAMI (OH)	34-12
W	USF	38-14
W	at Tennessee	31-17
W	KENTUCKY	48-14
L	at Alabama	6-31
L	LSU	29-33
L	MISSISSIPPI STATE	7-10
W	vs. GEORGIA (OT)	34-31
W	at Vanderbilt	55-14
L	SOUTH CAROLINA	14-36
W	APPALACHIAN STATE	48-10
L	at Florida State	7-31
	Outback Bowl	
W	vs. Penn State	37-24

PLAYER PROFILE

Chris Rainey
Photo by J. Meric/Getty Images

Rainey's Days Look Sunnier This Year

Chris Rainey didn't know what he was going to do.

In the days after his dismissal from the Florida football program following his Sept. 14 arrest for sending a threatening text message to an on-again, off-again girlfriend, Rainey wasn't sure if his football career was over.

The uncertainty was unbearable.

"I didn't want to think of that," the senior running back said. "It was (scary)."

Rainey eventually pled to a misdemeanor stalking charge on Sept. 27, but it was 15 more days before he found out that he'd be able to wear his Gators uniform again.

Then-UF coach Urban Meyer allowed Rainey to rejoin the team on Oct. 12 but said Rainey wouldn't be fully reinstated or allowed to play unless he met certain conditions.

Those were rough weeks, but they gave Rainey time to evaluate how he was living his life. It didn't take him long to realize he needed to change and finally begin to act like an adult.

"I grew up a lot," said Rainey, who finally returned to the field Oct. 30 against Georgia. "Did a lot of thinking. ... (I'm) looking at the future. That's in the past. New team, new me."

Florida's new head coach, Will Muschamp, likes and trusts the new Rainey.

"I certainly do," Muschamp said. "He's done nothing that has been any glitch as far as how he has performed on and off the field since I've been at the University of Florida.

"We all go through a maturing stage in our life and I certainly think obviously whatever happened — I don't even know — maybe he grew up from and learned from."

Rainey has rushed for 1,521 yards and 11 touchdowns in his UF career, and has caught 38 passes for 414 yards and four touchdowns.

Muschamp hopes Rainey can be a weapon in Charlie Weis' pro-style offense. Rainey is excited about the opportunity because he said the offense reminds him of what he did in high school when he ran for 2,478 yards and 32 touchdowns as a senior at Lakeland (Fla.).

"When I get the ball (in the I-formation), I can just read the whole field so that gives me a chance to read the field and do whatever I want," Rainey said. "That's why I tell them out there it feels like high school again."

Only he's a lot more mature off the field.

stretch more than he did previously and monitor how many field goals he kicks each day, but he said he should be 100 percent by the fall.

Freshman punter Kyle Christy, another early enrollee, has to replace punter Chas Henry, whose 43.0-yard career average is second in school history.

Wide receiver Andre Debose returned two kickoffs for touchdowns last season and gets the job full-time now. Running back Chris Rainey and wide receiver Frankie Hammond Jr. will handle punt returns.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

This isn't a good slate for a young, inexperienced team.

The non-conference schedule isn't bad with home games against Florida Atlantic, UAB and Furman, but the regular season finale is against ACC favorite Florida State in Gainesville. The Seminoles snapped a six-game losing streak in the series last season.

The Gators have tough SEC road games at Auburn, LSU and South Carolina. UF is 0-2 in its last two trips to Auburn (2001 and 2006); LSU is a national title contender; and South Carolina is the favorite to win the East Division.

The Auburn and LSU games are part of a four-game, five-week stretch that also includes Alabama in Gainesville and Georgia in Jacksonville that will determine whether the Gators can compete for the division title.

— Michael DiRocco

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	4-8
Sept. 10	UAB	4-8
Sept. 17	TENNESSEE	6-7
Sept. 24	at Kentucky	6-7
Oct. 1	ALABAMA	10-3
Oct. 8	at LSU	11-2
Oct. 15	at Auburn	14-0
Oct. 29	vs. Georgia	6-7
Nov. 5	VANDERBILT	2-10
Nov. 12	at South Carolina	9-5
Nov. 19	FURMAN	5-6
Nov. 26	FLORIDA STATE	10-4

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GEORGIA BULLDOGS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Bobo | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Todd Grantham** | **STADIUM: Sanford Stadium 92,746**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
6-7, 3-5 SEC (T-3rd, East)

COACH:
Mark Richt — At Georgia and overall: 96-34, 10 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
13; 5 offense, 6 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Aaron Murray, RB Isaiah Crowell, TE Orson Charles, WR Tavarres King, C Ben Jones, LB Jarvis Jones, CB/KR Brandon Boykin

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Murray established himself as a top SEC quarterback and should continue to mature. The O-line still has a lot of experience and size despite a few losses. The Dawgs have arguably the best collection of specialists in the country in K Blair Walsh, P Drew Butler and KR Brandon Boykin.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
King is the only proven receiver. The running game, although it has high upside, is a liability until someone actually produces. There could be as many as nine new defensive starters, including four who are new to the system and another, ILB Alec Ogletree, learning a new position.

KEY LOSSES:
WR A.J. Green, WR Kris Durham, OLB Justin Houston, OG Clint Boling, LB Marcus Dowtin

OVERVIEW:
Richt is optimistic that the revamped strength, conditioning and nutrition program will enable the Bulldogs to play more physical for 60 minutes. Crowell, one of the top running back prospects in the country, should help in that regard as well. There's more speed, and the players are in better condition to play the kind of attacking style defense Grantham wants to employ.

Prime Condition: Dawgs Re-commit to 'Paying the Price'

Mark Richt's overhaul of the Georgia program began long before spring practice, even long before the final recruiting push for his so-called Dream Team. It began even a month before the stunning, but very fitting, Liberty Bowl loss to Central Florida.

A year after firing defensive coordinator Willie Martinez, Richt reassigned strength and conditioning coordinator Dave Van Halanger to an administrative position and brought back Joe Tereshinski, who played for Vince Dooley.

The Bulldogs faltered down the stretch in all seven of their losses last season. The revamped program places a renewed focus on strength and has added closely monitored nutrition plans for the players. By spring practice, it was evident the program was paying off.

"We have to make sure that we are able to compete for the full 60 minutes and beyond at a level that will allow us to be legitimate contenders for the SEC East Division," Richt said.

"It's not only strength and conditioning. It's the little things you do on a daily basis. Academics, mentors, tutors, class, character education. We have all these things that need to be done properly on a daily basis. From what I see, I think everyone is willing and maybe even anxious to pay the price."

Richt is generally optimistic by nature. But there's an unmistakable tone of excitement in his voice as he looks ahead to the season. A lot of that does have to do with the impact this Dream Team recruiting class already had on spring practice before the newcomers even arrived. The anticipation of the influx of talent generated a renewed sense of urgency among the returning players.

"I think it's going to be an exciting fall," Richt said.

"(The returning players) have to prove they're ready to play. Then in the fall there will be a bunch of jobs up for grabs, and it will be fun to watch the competition. But I do think this new class will be very hungry for playing time.

"We'll see if the veterans can hold them off. Hopefully, that's exactly what we see, guys competing like mad for playing time, either that they should be a starter or deserve playing time."

OFFENSE

If nothing else was accomplished last season, at least the Dawgs settled their quarterback concerns for the next three years.

Aaron Murray set a Georgia freshman record with 3,216 total yards. His 154.48 passer rating ranked 14th best in the country. Murray should only be better with a complete year of experience under his belt.

But he needs help.

The receiving corps must replace the best wideout in school history, A.J. Green, and Kris Durham, who had 32 catches and led the team with a 20.6 yards per catch average. Senior Tavarres King, a big-time talent, caught 27 passes last year and needs to become the go-to receiver.

Beyond King, though, someone needs to have a similar breakthrough. Marlon Brown, Michael Bennett, Israel Troupe and Rantavious Wooten all have talent but need to produce.

Having a great receiving tight end helps, and few are better than Orson Charles. A high school teammate of Murray's, Charles caught 26 passes and draws coverage down field that should help the receivers.

Re-establishing a run game needs to be a priority. Injuries and discipline issues led to disappointing seasons from

Washaun Ealey
Photo by RD Moore

Washaun Ealey and Caleb King. Ealey led the team with 811 yards rushing but took a step backward when he missed much of spring practice with an injury.

The opportunity for a freshman running back to make an immediate impact was obvious when the Dawgs were recruiting Isaiah Crowell. On one of Crowell's visits, Richt had 10 offensive players line up in a formation. The missing player was a tailback.

On signing day, Richt admitted that Crowell, rated by many analysts as the top running back prospect in the country, could be the starter when the Dawgs open the season against Boise State.

Bruce Figgins, a former starter at tight end, was moved to fullback to bring experience and blocking ability into the backfield.

Rebuilding the line is a challenge inherited by new line coach Will Friend. There was already attrition with Clint Boling, Chris Davis and Josh Davis finishing their college careers, and Tanner Strickland had to end his career early with an injury.

Trinton Sturdivant's third knee injury left Friend with only two clear-cut starters — center Ben Jones and left tackle Cordy Glenn. And Glenn moved over from guard, so he's learning a new position.

Kenarious Gates started some as a true freshman and will start at left guard. The right side will take some sorting out. Redshirt freshman Brent Benedict probably would have started at guard, but Sturdivant's injury forced him to move to tackle.

Friend would like to get everyone settled into their positions early in preseason practice. But it may take a few games to find the best starting five.

DEFENSE

Although second-year defensive coordinator Todd Grantham rejected using the adjustment period as an excuse for his defense last year — which wavered between outstanding and poor — he embraced the idea of significant improvement in the second year.

He pointed to the improvement Alabama made in Nick Saban's second year with the Crimson Tide.

"When you look at us, we're a work in progress," Grantham said. "At times we played well. Other times, we didn't get the job done. I thought we did some things well, but we could have played better. We need to finish."

On paper, six starters return. But it's very conceivable that Grantham's defense could have nine new starters when the season opens. The only two players who seem set to start at their positions from last year are inside linebacker Christian Robinson and cornerback Brandon Boykin.

Signing junior college nose tackle John Jenkins allowed DeAngelo Tyson

Aaron Murray
Photo by Mike Zarrilli/Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Aaron Murray*	So.	Ready to build off solid freshman season.	Hutson Mason, So.
RB	Caleb King	Sr.	Responded to challenge with strong spring.	I. Crowell, Fr./W. Ealey, Jr.*
FB	Bruce Figgins	Sr.	Brings excellent TE blocking skills to backfield.	Alexander Ogletree, So.
WR	Tavarres King	Jr.	Ready to take on A.J. Green's role as the go-to.	Michael Bennett, Fr.
WR	Rantavious Wooten	Jr.	Caught only seven passes but has talent.	Israel Troupe, Sr.
TE	Orson Charles*	Jr.	Has WR skills and has improved as a blocker	Aron White Sr.
LT	Cordy Glenn*	Sr.	Moved from LG to protect Murray.	Kolton Houston, Fr.
LG	Kenarious Gates	So.	Performed adequately as a true freshman.	John Bodin, Jr.
C	Ben Jones*	Sr.	Undisputed leader of the line and the team.	Chris Burnette, So.
RG	Justin Anderson	Sr.	Returns from defense and coming off injury.	Dallas Lee, So.
RT	Brent Benedict	Fr.	Moved from OG after Trinton Sturdivant's injury.	A.J. Harmon, Jr.
K	Blair Walsh*	Sr.	Two-time Lou Groza Award finalist.	Brandon Bogotay, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Abry Jones*	Jr.	Could lose job to Geathers if Jenkins is ready.	Garrison Smith, So.
NT	Kwame Geathers*	So.	Defensive MVP of the spring ready to blossom.	Jonathan Jenkins, Jr.
DE	Deangelo Tyson*	Sr.	Played NT last year but is better suited for DE.	Derrick Lott, So.
LB	Ray Drew	Fr.	Replaces Justin Houston as team's top pass rusher.	Reuben Faloughi, So.
LB	Alec Ogletree	So.	Moved from SS to add speed to front seven.	Michael Gilliard, Jr.
LB	Christian Robinson*	Jr.	Most experienced player in the LB corps.	Richard Samuel, Jr.
LB	Jarvis Jones	So.	USC transfer ready to make an impact.	Cornelius Washington, Jr.
CB	Brandon Boykin*	Sr.	Needs to become a better ball hawk.	Jordan Love, So.
CB	Branden Smith	Jr.	Great speed, can run with anybody.	Damien Swann, Fr.
SS	Bacarri Rambo	Jr.	Experienced, but had offseason knee surgery.	Jakar Hamilton, Sr.
FS	Sanders Commings*	Jr.	Moved from CB to get best four DBs on the field.	Shawn Williams Jr.
P	Drew Butler*	Sr.	Ray Guy Award candidate can boom or pooch.	Adam Erickson, Fr.

*Returning Starter

BULLDOGS RECRUITING 2011 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Isaiah Crowell
Because he's a five-star recruit, some expect Crowell to be an opening-day star. That may or may not happen (Georgia returns a handful of backs), but one thing is certain: he should get plenty of playing time in 2011. Crowell boasts a nice blend of size and speed, and has a good set of hands.

Ray Drew
While some consider Drew to be a bit of a project, he is still an immensely talented player who has a chance to provide an instant impact for a beleaguered defensive line. Georgia ranked only 71st in sacks in 2010, and Drew is a speed rusher who can make plays.

Malcolm Mitchell
Mitchell is an exceptional athlete who might secure early playing time. The question is, where? He could play either receiver or defensive back in college. With Georgia having a pretty big need at receiver, Mitchell might start his career on offense. He's already relatively polished as a receiver and has great speed.

THE SLEEPER

Kent Turene
At times, Turene's weight was an issue in high school. But when he's in shape, there's no doubt he has plenty of ability. Turene is big and physical enough to play inside linebacker, and quick and aggressive enough to line up on the outside. Georgia coaches have said he could play either.

Committments	26
Average Stars	3.58
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	12
★★★☆☆	11
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	93
National Rank: 5	SEC: 2

2012 NEEDS: More than anything else, the Bulldogs need pass rushers. Lack of a steady pass rush was a major issue this past season and Georgia tried to address that with its 2011 signing class. Still, much more help at defensive end and outside linebacker is needed and the Bulldogs have lots of offers out to players at those two spots. Georgia also could use more help at receiver. It hopes to add three or four of them in this cycle, so that's another spot to watch.

By Barton Simmons/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
David Andrews	OL	6-2	275	★★★	Norcross, GA	Wesleyan
Rated as the No. 39 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 9 center...Participated in NUC All-World Gridiron Classic...Chose Georgia over Duke, Michigan and Vanderbilt.						
Sterling Bailey	DE	6-5	260	★★★★	Gainesville, GA	East Hall
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 8 strongside defensive end....Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl... Recorded 68 tackles, 22 tackles for loss and five sacks as a senior.						
Devin Bowman	ATH	6-0	175	★★★	Rossville, GA	Ridgeland
Rated as the No. 33 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 29 athlete...Brother Adarius is a wide receiver in the CFL and brother Michael is a wide receiver at Alabama.						
Chris Conley	WR	6-3	180	★★★	Dallas, GA	North Paulding
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 wide receiver...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Isaiah Crowell	RB	5-11	210	★★★★★	Columbus, GA	Carver
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 4 running back...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Chose Georgia over Alabama.						
Watts Dantzler	OL	6-7	315	★★★	Dalton, GA	Dalton
Rated as the No. 36 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 44 offensive tackle...Participated in NUC All-World Gridiron Classic...Averaged 17 points and nine rebounds for basketball team.						
Zach DeBell	OL	6-7	265	★★★	Tarpon Springs, FL	Tarpon Springs
Rated as the No. 76 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 41 offensive tackle...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Ray Drew	DE	6-5	243	★★★★★	Thomasville, GA	Thomas County Central
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 1 weakside defensive end... Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Quintavious Harrow	DB	6-0	190	★★★	Columbus, GA	Carver
Recorded 45 tackles and three sacks as a senior...Also participated in track.						
Amarlo Herrera	LB	6-1	224	★★★★	College Park, GA	North Clayton
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 13 inside linebacker...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Jonathan Jenkins	DT	6-4	340	★★★★	Perkinston, MS	Gulf Coast C.C.
Rated as the No. 6 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Chose Georgia over Florida, Miami and Oklahoma State.						
Christian LeMay	QB	6-2	200	★★★★	Matthews, NC	Butler
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in North Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 4 pro-style quarterback...Threw for 3,296 yards and 48 touchdowns with only two interceptions as a junior.						
Hunter Long	OL	6-3	293	★★★	Eads, TN	Briarcrest Christian
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Brother of Georgia offensive lineman Austin Long.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Nick Marshall	ATH	6-2	185	★★★★	Rochelle, GA	Wilcox County
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 15 athlete...Led team to Class A state title as a junior...Also a standout in basketball.						
Chris Mayes	DT	6-5	295	★★★★	Griffin, GA	Spalding
Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 defensive tackle...Recorded 34 tackles, nine tackles for loss and two sacks as a senior.						
Malcolm Mitchell	DB	6-1	187	★★★★	Valdosta, GA	Valdosta
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 1 cornerback...Set school single-season reception record in 2010 with 77 catches for 1,419 yards and seven touchdowns.						
Corey Moore	DB	6-1	195	★★★★	Griffin, GA	Griffin
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 5 safety...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Also lettered in basketball and track.						
Jay Rome	TE	6-5	255	★★★★	Valdosta, GA	Valdosta
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 4 tight end...Caught 45 passes for 555 yards and seven touchdowns as a senior.						
Chris Sanders	ATH	6-1	176	★★★	Tucker, GA	Tucker
Rated as the No. 32 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 athlete...Participated in GACA North-South All-Star Football Classic.						
Justin Scott-Wesley	WR	6-1	210	★★★★	Camilla, GA	Mitchell County
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 wide receiver...Class AA state champion in 100- and 200-meter dash.						
Sanford Seay	WR	6-2	198	★★★	Leesburg, GA	Lee County
Rated as the No. 41 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 68 wide receiver...Had 68 catches for 1,105 yards and 15 touchdowns as a senior.						
Damian Swann	DB	6-0	175	★★★★	Atlanta, GA	Grady
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 3 cornerback...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Nathan Theus	OL	6-3	255	★★	Jacksonville, FL	Bolles
Helped lead team to an undefeated regular season and district title in 2010, a district title and FHSSA Class AA state championship in 2009 and an undefeated season and FHSSA Class AA state championship in 2008.						
Kent Turene	LB	6-3	230	★★★	Lauderdale Lakes, FL	Boyd Anderson
Rated as the No. 52 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 18 inside linebacker...Recorded 110 tackles and two interceptions as a senior.						
Xzavier Ward	OL	6-7	270	★★★	Moultrie, GA	Colquitt County
Rated as the No. 34 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 42 offensive tackle...Helped lead team to state championship game.						
Ramik Wilson	LB	6-3	218	★★★★	Tampa, FL	Jefferson
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 34 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 12 inside linebacker...Recorded 90 tackles and 18 sacks as a senior.						

BULLDOGS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
24	Jamel Allen	ILB	6-2	226	Jr.	Sylvester
79	Justin Anderson	OG	6-5	342	Sr.	Ocilla
73	Brent Benedict	OT	6-5	312	Fr.	Jacksonville, FL
82	Michael Bennett	SE	6-3	208	Fr.	Alpharetta
10	Greg Bingham	QB	6-4	223	Fr.	Columbus
65	John Bodin	OG	6-6	321	Jr.	Covington
32	Brandon Bogotay	K	6-3	207	Sr.	San Diego, CA
2	Brandon Boykin	CB	5-10	183	Sr.	Fayetteville
80	Taylor Bradberry	FLK	6-3	192	Jr.	Winder
7	Kyle Brock	SS	6-1	200	So.	Americus
15	Marlon Brown	SE	6-5	222	Jr.	Memphis, TN
68	Chris Burnette	C	6-2	313	So.	LaGrange
41	Brandon Burrows	DE	6-3	240	Fr.	Marietta
13	Drew Butler	P	6-2	214	Sr.	Duluth
42	Cory Campbell	LB	5-10	210	Fr.	Hephzibah
4	Luis Capella	CB	5-10	176	So.	Augusta
7	Orson Charles	TE	6-3	241	Jr.	Tampa, FL
19	Sanders Commings	CB	6-2	217	Jr.	Augusta
31	Chris Conley	WR	6-3	202	Fr.	Dallas
98	Candler Cook	N	6-3	234	Sr.	Atlanta
25	Marc Deas	FS	6-1	197	Fr.	Kissimmee, FL
90	Matthew DeGenova	DE	6-1	236	Sr.	Kenner, LA
28	Corey Dunson	CB	6-0	196	So.	Albany
3	Washaun Ealey	TB	5-11	219	Jr.	Stillmore
87	Eric Elliot	FS	5-9	188	Sr.	Kennesaw
19	Michael Erdman	WR	5-10	191	Fr.	Merritt Island, FL
97	Adam Erickson	P	5-10	168	Fr.	Athens
95	Reuben Faloughi	OLB	6-5	255	So.	Martinez
89	Bruce Figgins	FB	6-4	272	Sr.	Columbus
69	Ty Frix	SN	6-0	213	Jr.	Calhoun
72	Kenarious Gates	OG	6-5	328	So.	Grantville
99	Kwame Geathers	N	6-6	350	So.	Georgetown, SC
35	Michael Gilliard	ILB	6-2	220	Jr.	Valdosta
71	Cordy Glenn	OT	6-5	348	Sr.	Riverdale
23	Jakar Hamilton	FS	6-2	205	Sr.	Johnston, SC
70	A.J. Harmon	OT	6-5	345	Jr.	Louisville
20	Brandon Harton	FLK	5-6	174	So.	Reidsville
12	Austin Herod	CB	5-10	191	So.	Woodstock
75	Kolton Houston	OT	6-5	291	Fr.	Buford
94	Billy Johnson	SN	6-0	239	Jr.	Braselton
93	Abry Jones	DE	6-3	309	Jr.	Warner Robins
61	Ben Jones	C	6-3	316	Sr.	Centreville, AL
29	Jarvis Jones	OLB	6-3	241	So.	Columbus
4	Caleb King	TB	5-11	224	Sr.	Norcross
12	Tavarres King	SE	6-1	192	Jr.	Mount Airy, NC
85	Greg Lanier	SE	6-1	189	Sr.	Clarkesville
64	Dallas Lee	OG	6-4	300	So.	Buford
16	Christian LeMay	QB	6-2	198	Fr.	Matthews, NC
99	Jamie Lindley	PK	5-11	177	Jr.	Savannah
74	Austin Long	OT	6-5	304	So.	Memphis, TN
53	Jeremy Longo	DE	6-3	251	Jr.	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
85	Derrick Lott	DE	6-4	303	So.	Kennesaw
10	Jordan Love	CB	6-0	190	So.	Glen Allen, VA
88	Arthur Lynch	TE	6-5	272	So.	Dartmouth, MA
24	Ken Malcome	TB	6-0	226	Fr.	Decatur
14	Hutson Mason	QB	6-3	196	So.	Marietta
25	Rhett McGowan	SE	6-0	190	So.	Calhoun
92	Dexter Morant	DE	6-7	245	Fr.	Manning, SC
11	Aaron Murray	QB	6-1	211	So.	Tampa, FL
11	Connor Norman	CB	5-10	208	Fr.	Duluth
9	Alec Ogletree	ILB	6-3	236	So.	Newnan
46	Alexander Ogletree	FB	5-10	224	So.	Newnan
20	Derek Owens	CB	5-9	166	So.	Jacksonville, FL
23	Alex Parsons	TB	5-10	194	So.	Fayetteville
18	Bacarri Rambo	SS	6-0	218	Jr.	Donalsonville
3	Lucas Redd	SS	6-1	217	Fr.	Jefferson
58	Ben Reynolds	C	6-2	255	So.	Bainbridge
45	Christian Robinson	ILB	6-2	226	Jr.	Norcross
42	Dustin Royston	FB	5-11	242	So.	Royston
5	Blake Sailors	CB	5-11	186	So.	Athens
22	Richard Samuel	ILB	6-2	243	Jr.	Cartersville
1	Branden Smith	CB	5-11	176	Jr.	Atlanta
56	Garrison Smith	DE	6-3	294	So.	Atlanta
44	T.J. Stripling	OLB	6-6	222	So.	Decatur
77	Trinton Sturdivant	OT	6-5	310	Sr.	Wadesboro, NC
38	Jeremy Sulek	ILB	6-1	209	Sr.	Dacula
30	Carlton Thomas	TB	5-7	163	Jr.	Frostproof, FL
96	Mike Thornton	N	6-1	287	Fr.	Stone Mountain
28	Israel Troupe	FLK	6-1	222	Sr.	Tifton
94	DeAngelo Tyson	DE	6-2	306	Sr.	Statesboro
36	Wes Van Dyk	TB	6-0	203	Jr.	Highland Park, TX
33	Chase Vasser	OLB	6-3	227	So.	Gainesville
48	Kosta Vavlas	ILB	6-0	219	Fr.	Tarpon Springs, FL
49	Jason Veal	ILB	5-11	220	Sr.	Lilburn
57	Blair Walsh	PK	5-10	192	Sr.	Boca Raton, FL
83	Cornelius Washington	OLB	6-4	269	Jr.	Hephzibah
2	Parker Welch	QB	6-3	204	Fr.	Jesup
81	Aron White	TE	6-4	239	Sr.	Columbia, MO
67	Hugh Williams	OT	6-5	254	Fr.	Atlanta
36	Shawn Williams	FS	6-1	220	Jr.	Damascus
17	Rantavious Wooten	FLK	5-10	185	Jr.	Belle Glade, FL
31	Chris Young	FB	6-1	230	So.	Hinesville

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

PASSING	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
A. Murray	13	154.48	209	342	8	61.1	3049	24	66	234.5
H. Mason	4	122.75	9	17	0	52.9	102	1	26	25.5

RECEIVING

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
A.J. Green	9	57	848	14.9	9	50	94.2
K. Durham	11	32	659	20.6	3	66	59.9
T. King	12	27	504	18.7	3	63	42.0

RUSHING

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
W. Ealey	12	157	828	17	811	5.2	11	58	67.6
C. King	8	80	455	25	430	5.4	2	32	53.8
C. Thomas	10	64	291	19	272	4.2	2	15	27.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: A. Dent 126, B. Rambo 82, J. Houston 67
Tackles for loss: J. Houston 18.5, A. Dent 6.5, B. Boykin 6.5
Sacks: J. Houston 10, A. Dent 2.5, C. Robinson 2
Interceptions: B. Rambo 3, B. Boykin 3, S. Commings 3

NOTEBOOK

All eyes will be on Georgia's highly acclaimed Dream Team recruiting class this fall. Coach **Mark Richt** said the competition will be wide open.

The spotlight falls brightest on tailback **Isaiah Crowell**, but Richt tempered the excitement with a reminder that Crowell must prove he can pass protect like a veteran before he wins the job.

"First you have to know what to do, then you have to know how to do it. Then you have to have a burning desire to do it," Richt said.

"You can know who to block and know the proper technique. But if you don't have the desire, it's just not going to happen. That's usually the last thing they figure out because they haven't been asked to do it a whole lot, so it's new for them.

"When all those backs realize that that's just as important to me as making a guy miss in space, then the better off they're going to be to become an every down back."

• As many as six players from the 2010 signing class could earn starting jobs. Offensive guard **Kenarious Gates** and inside linebacker **Alec Ogletree** already have.

Offensive tackle/guard **Brent Benedict** will probably start, and **Kolton Houston** has a chance of winning a job either at right tackle or right guard. Wide receiver **Michael Bennett** and free safety **Marc Deas** are pushing for starting jobs.

That list doesn't include starting outside linebacker **Jarvis Jones**, a transfer from USC who came in with the 2010 class. The 2010 class was ranked "just" 15th in the country by Rivals.com, one of the lowest-rated classes under Richt.

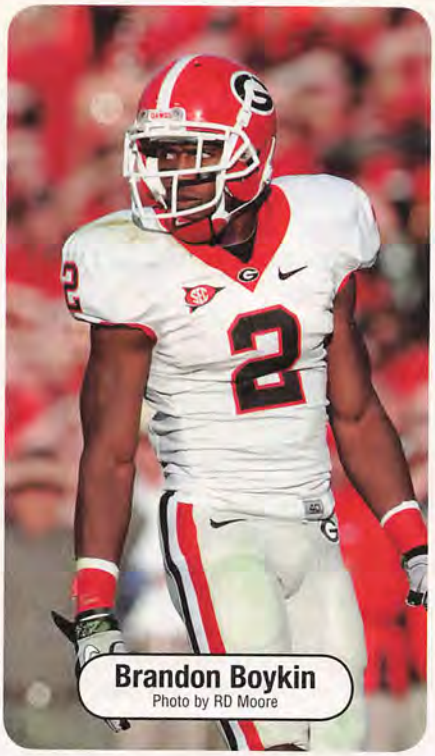
• Richt has not tipped his hand — or maybe even made up his mind — what to do with backup quarterback **Hutson Mason**. He played sparingly last season as a true freshman, but that was simply to get him some experience in case of an injury to **Aaron Murray**.

There's speculation that the coaches will attempt to redshirt Mason this year. But true freshman **Christian LeMay** will be redshirted, so the decision with Mason may come down to the situation. If the coaches just need someone to take snaps to run out the clock, one of the walk-ons could do that.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On the talent level:** "I expect Georgia to have a good year and be contenders. I don't know what happened to them last year. I thought when we played them they were one of the most talented teams we played — if not the most talented. … It seems to me Georgia gets less out of its talent than a lot of other teams in the league. But I think Georgia's defensive coordinator (Todd Grantham) is really good. They were one of the teams we just could not block."

• **On the opener:** "Boise State is a big game for them. If they beat Boise State everything will be fine. If they don't, there will be a lot of barking there."



Brandon Boykin
Photo by RD Moore

to move back to his natural end position. Kwame Geathers took advantage of the opportunity inside and was the spring defensive MVP. Grantham didn't rule out moving Geathers to end as well. That would give the Dawgs an entirely new front and one that's very strong.

"You have to be good up the middle," Grantham said. "If they can block the nose one-on-one, your linebackers aren't always free."

Alec Ogletree's move to inside linebacker prompted Bacarri Rambo's move to strong safety, which in turn allowed Sanders Commings to move to free safety.

The biggest challenge for Grantham will be replacing outside linebacker Justin Houston. But freshman Ray Drew, arguably the most coveted linebacker the Dawgs have signed since Boss Bailey, should step into Houston's role as the pass rusher off the edge.

Ogletree's move also allowed Jarvis Jones, another former blue chipper who redshirted last season after transferring from USC, to move to the other outside linebacker spot.

That foursome of Robinson, Ogletree, Jones and Drew could give the Dawgs one of the most athletic groups of linebackers in the SEC. The Dawgs hope Richard Samuel can turn promise into production as another inside linebacker.

"Defense is about playing fast and physical," Grantham said. "We have some good players. We just have to improve their habits and toughness."

There's talent but still some sorting out to do in the secondary.

Boykin and Branden Smith, a part-time starter, are established at the cornerbacks. With freshmen Damian Swann and Nick Marshall coming in, Commings, the primary starter at corner opposite Boykin, was moved to free safety. Rambo will be able to better use his physical style as he moves from starting free safety to strong safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Blair Walsh and Drew Butler return for their senior years and could give the Dawgs an All-America sweep. Walsh was nearly perfect last year, hitting on 20 of 23 field goal attempts and 46 of 47 PATs. He also improved his kickoffs with 15 touchbacks.

Butler average 44.5 yards per punt and downed 19 punts inside the 20-yard line. He had 14 punts of 50 yards or longer.

Brandon Boykin is one of the most electrifying kick returners in the country. He had a 100-yard return for a touchdown against Kentucky, giving

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Aaron Murray

With Cam Newton, Ryan Mallett and others gone, Murray suddenly emerges as the top QB in the conference. ... Murray set a Georgia freshman record with 3,049 passing yards and threw for 24 touchdowns with only eight interceptions. ... His ability to scramble (four rushing touchdowns) gives the offense another dimension. ... He rated 14th nationally last season in passing efficiency with a 154.48 rating.

EMERGING STAR

LB Alec Ogletree

Ogletree finished his freshman season as the starting strong safety. Moving him to inside linebacker was designed to get him closer to the ball and free Jarvis Jones to move outside. ... Ogletree brings speed and relentless pursuit to the front seven. At 6-3, 236 pounds, this move might have been inevitable for Ogletree anyway. ... He made 34 tackles last season.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Isaiah Crowell

Nobody's arrival is as highly anticipated as Crowell. ... At a minimum, Crowell will give the Dawgs another look in the backfield. On the upside, Crowell could combine with Aaron Murray to give the Dawgs the best passing-running tandem in the conference. ... Rated by multiple recruiting services as the No. 1 running back prospect in the country as a senior at Carver High School in Columbus, Ga.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.5	29
Rushing	148.3	56
Passing	277.7	16
Total	426.0	22
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.5	59
Rushing	122.3	27
Passing	189.7	3
Total	312.0	22
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 3	- 0.23	73

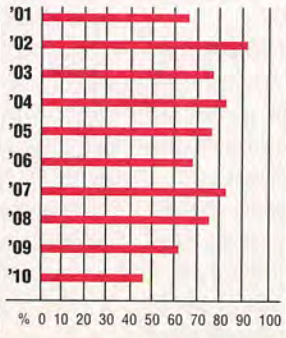
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.9	51
Rushing	161.0	47
Passing	201.2	80
Total	362.2	75
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.9	63
Rushing	126.2	36
Passing	213.2	51
Total	339.4	38
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 16	- 1.23	118

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.1	30
Rushing	142.6	73
Passing	242.4	40
Total	385.0	56
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.1	36
Rushing	147.2	56
Passing	181.3	17
Total	328.5	23
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 10	+ 0.77	19

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

6-7, 3-5

W	LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE	55-7
L	at South Carolina	6-17
L	ARKANSAS	24-31
L	at Mississippi State	12-24
L	at Colorado	27-29
W	TENNESSEE	41-14
W	VANDERBILT	43-0
W	at Kentucky	44-31
L	vs. FLORIDA (OT)	31-34
W	IDAHO STATE	55-7
L	at Auburn	31-49
W	GEORGIA TECH	42-34
	Liberty Bowl	
L	vs. UCF	6-10

PLAYER PROFILE

Tavarres King
Photo by Wesley Hitt/Getty Images

King Taking Baton from WR A.J. Green

Soon after A.J. Green announced he would forego his senior year at Georgia and enter the NFL draft, Tavarres King called all of the Bulldogs' returning wide receivers together. The Dawgs had also lost Kris Durham, their other starting receiver.

King let the group know that everyone would have to step up their offseason work — beginning with himself.

"I don't want people pointing fingers at the receivers and saying we're the weak spot because we're not," King said. "We have some good receivers. The talent is there."

Offensive coordinator Mike Bobo likes the leadership path from King, a junior because he received a medical redshirt in 2008.

"I think Tavarres has the right mentality," said Bobo. "He sees himself as the veteran of the group. Tavarres has an unbelievable skill set, just what you want in a receiver. We feel like Tavarres King is an upper-level receiver in this league."

Green and King were considered bookend blue chip receivers in the 2008 signing class. While Green became one of the top receivers in college football and arguably the best in Georgia history, King has shown flashes of the talent that made him a high school All-American. He has caught 47 passes for 947 yards and four touchdowns in his career.

With Green and Durham gone, it's clear that the Dawgs will need King to continue that progression. King welcomes the challenge.

"I'm just excited to be in this position I'm in," King said. "I had an opportunity to watch guys in front of me. It's not going to be an easy thing. It's going to be difficult. But I'm up for the challenge."

At 6-1, King is three inches shorter than Green. But he's every bit as explosive downfield. He averaged 18.7 yards per catch and had a 63-yarder against Florida. Georgia coach Mark Richt expressed confidence King will take his game up a notch.

"He's got to do two things, in my opinion, and he's already doing one of them and that's to become physically stronger and have the stamina to stay strong throughout the season," Richt said. "And he has to become more physical as far as his blocking. I've already seen him do the things as far as route running, ball catching, getting off the jam."

While King's focus is on this season, he's also motivated by his dream of playing in the NFL.

"That's what you work for," he said. "You work to play the game you love as long as you can play."

him four for his career, and averaged 24 yards per return.

Logan Gray's transfer to Colorado means Boykin will have to handle the punt return duties unless someone steps up. That could be taxing, though, when Boykin is having to cover deep routes on defense, then return punts. The coaches might look for help in the freshman class.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

It won't take long to learn whether Georgia has improved. The Bulldogs open the season Sept. 3 in the Georgia Dome against Boise State. The next week is no easier with South Carolina coming to Athens.

But the schedule does lighten considerably. After a break against Coastal Carolina, there's a trip to Ole Miss, which replaces Arkansas in the interdivision rotation. Then the Bulldogs play one in-state game in October — vs. Mississippi State on Oct. 1 — followed by road games against Tennessee and Vanderbilt.

In all, that's seven straight games before a week off, and then the showdown with Florida in Jacksonville.

November brings three straight home games against New Mexico State, Auburn and Kentucky before closing the regular season at Georgia Tech. Having to play Kentucky amid their rivalry stretch of Florida, Auburn and Georgia Tech could be troublesome.

— Guerry Clegg

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	vs. Boise State	12-1
Sept. 10	SOUTH CAROLINA	9-5
Sept. 17	COASTAL CAROLINA	6-6
Sept. 24	at Ole Miss	4-8
Oct. 1	MISSISSIPPI STATE	9-4
Oct. 8	at Tennessee	6-7
Oct. 15	at Vanderbilt	2-10
Oct. 29	vs. Florida (Jacksonville)	8-5
Nov. 5	NEW MEXICO STATE	2-10
Nov. 12	AUBURN	14-0
Nov. 19	KENTUCKY	6-7
Nov. 26	at Georgia Tech	6-7

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KENTUCKY WILDCATS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Randy Sanders **DEFENSIVE CO-COORDINATORS:** Rick Minter, Steve Brown **STADIUM:** Commonwealth Stadium: 67,942

AT A GLANCE

2010:
6-7, 2-6 SEC (5th, East)

COACH:
Joker Phillips — At Kentucky and overall: 6-7, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
16; 6 offense, 8 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
LB Danny Trevathan, OG Larry Warford, QB Morgan Newton, OG Stuart Hines, S Winston Guy, WR La'Rod King

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Wildcats return four starters on the offensive line, including two potential All-SEC candidates in Warford and Hines. Newton had a solid spring throwing the ball and could blossom in his first full season as a starter. Minter's new schemes could invigorate an experienced defense.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The offense doesn't have any proven playmakers surrounding Newton, and the receivers struggled to catch the ball in the spring. Kentucky has always had trouble stopping the run, and the defensive line is small and doesn't have much depth.

KEY LOSSES:
WR/KR/PR Randall Cobb, RB Derrick Locke, QB Mike Hartline

OVERVIEW:
Phillips has his work cut out for him to get the Wildcats to a sixth straight bowl. The offense figures to take a step back due to major personnel losses, and the defense has its fair share of questions as well.

Phillips Facing Major Questions In Year Two

In some ways, Joker Phillips' first year replacing coach Rich Brooks was a success. The Wildcats defeated arch-rival Louisville, beat SEC East champion South Carolina — getting their first-ever win over a Steve Spurrier-coached team — and went to a fifth consecutive bowl.

But the year ended on a sour note as Pittsburgh soundly beat Kentucky in the BBVA Compass Bowl, sealing the Wildcats' first losing season since 2005.

Now Phillips has the tough task of replacing several key cogs from last year's high-powered offense, including do-everything receiver Randall Cobb. Cobb set the single-season SEC record for all-purpose yards and bypassed his senior season to enter the NFL Draft.

"I don't know if you can replace a Randall Cobb, but we've got to try," Phillips said. "Nobody had really heard of Randall when he first walked through our doors, so now we've got to find out who the next Randall Cobb is."

Also gone: Quarterback Mike Hartline, who threw for 3,178 yards; versatile tailback Derrick Locke, who rushed for 2,618 career yards; receiver Chris Matthews, who tied for the league lead in touchdown receptions.

UK does have a quarterback with some experience in junior Morgan Newton, who has started nine games in two seasons. Newton started the bowl game while Hartline was out due to suspension, and he looked like a much-improved passer in the spring.

The offensive line, which returns four starters, will have to carry the load while the young skill players develop, and the Cats should have one of the best guard tandems in the league in junior Larry Warford and senior Stuart Hines.

"All good offenses start with a good offensive line, and we believe we should be solid up front," Phillips said.

Kentucky's young defense took its share of lumps last season, but the top 11 tacklers return, including All-SEC linebacker Danny Trevathan, who led the league in stops with 144. The Wildcats also will have a new look defensively, as co-defensive coordinator Rick Minter used the spring to implement a multiple scheme that will replace the previous 4-3 alignment.

The Cats were still trying to catch on to the new system in the spring, but Phillips believes his squad should be improved defensively once the players pick it up.

"Rick (Minter) threw a lot at them this spring," Phillips said. "But we believe that the changes will put certain guys in position to make big plays for us defensively, and that's the one thing we've been lacking."

OFFENSE

The biggest priority for Phillips in the spring was sharpening the passing game, and Morgan Newton did his part, throwing for 256 yards and three touchdowns in the Blue/White Spring Game.

When asked how far Newton had come as a passer since that BBVA Compass Bowl, Phillips replied: "Night and day. For us to have success, we have to throw the football. We want to throw the football. I'm pleased with the way Morgan has progressed. He now understands the offense and changes protections, and I like the way he's handling himself in the huddle and at the line of scrimmage."

The receivers are another story.

The wideouts dropped pass after pass in the spring game and still don't appear to have a go-to player. La'Rod King is the most logical choice after catching

Winston Guy
Photo by David Durochik / Sportpics

36 passes for 478 yards and five touchdowns last season, but he'll have to learn to adjust after taking advantage of defenses that focused on Randall Cobb and Chris Matthews.

Sophomore Brian Adams, who divided his time between football and baseball in the spring, has potential as a playmaker, with senior Matt Roark and juniors Gene McCaskill and E.J. Fields also in the mix. McCaskill missed the 2010 season with a knee injury and also sat out the spring to continue rehab. Phillips said he'll also give five freshman signees a long look in the fall.

The Cats will miss Derrick Locke's explosiveness and pass-catching ability out of the backfield. Sophomore Raymond Sanders got his feet wet as the No. 2 back behind Locke and ended spring atop the depth chart ... but depth is questionable at best after that.

Phillips said this is another position where true freshmen could make an impact. Kentucky signed two touted prep backs from Georgia — Marcus Caffey and Josh Clemons.

Phillips should be able to rest easy about the offensive line. Larry Warford earned second-team All-SEC honors last year at right guard, and offensive line coach Mike Summers thinks he could be among the nation's best in 2011.

"Larry doesn't have a bigger fan in the country than me," Summers said.

"I'm so impressed by what he does. I don't ever tell him that, but there's no doubt that he is one of the elite linemen in the country. But he still has a lot of things he has to do with that talent to perform at that level consistently."

Warford will be joined by three other returning starters — left guard Stuart Hines, center Matt Smith and left tackle Chandler Burden. The projected right tackle, Billy Joe Murphy, has nine career starts.

DEFENSE

Phillips shook things up in the offseason by bringing in coordinator Rick Minter, whom he worked for as an assistant at Cincinnati. Gone is the basic 4-3 alignment used in the past several years. UK will use a multiple scheme that will switch among 4-3, 3-4 and 4-2-5 alignments without changing personnel.

"We're going to be aggressive; we're going to move people around; we're going to attack," Minter said.

"We can't sit on our heels. We're going to try mix things up, come at offenses with different combinations of zone coverages, pressures, man-to-man, you name it."

Several players had to get used to new positions during the spring.

Senior Winston Guy has spent most of his career at strong safety and will still be in that spot, on paper. But he'll also move closer to the line of scrimmage and play linebacker in some

Danny Trevathan
Photo by Mark Cornelison/Lexington Herald-Leader/MCT via Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Morgan Newton	Jr.	Undisputed starter for the first time.	Maxwell Smith, Fr.
TB	Raymond Sanders	So.	A versatile back with good feet.	Jonathan George, So.
WR	La'Rod King*	Jr.	Five TDs as the No. 3 receiver in 2010.	E.J. Fields, Jr.
WR	Matt Roark	Sr.	Rangy receiver needs consistency.	Gene McCaskill, Jr.
WR	Brian Adams	So.	Solid baseball prospect in center field.	Aaron Boyd, Jr.
TE	Nick Melillo	Sr.	Slowed by ankle injury last fall.	Jordan Aumiller, So.*
LT	Chandler Burden*	Sr.	Played well in first year on the line.	Teven Eatmon-Nared, Fr.
LG	Stuart Hines*	Sr.	Two-year starter is the leader of the line.	Kevin Mitchell, So.
C	Matt Smith*	Jr.	Excels at making calls and the shotgun snap.	Sam Simpson, So.
RG	Larry Warford*	Jr.	Coaches see the NFL in his future.	Jake Lanefski, Sr.
RT	Billy Joe Murphy	Sr.	Seasoned backup who has made nine starts.	Trevino Woods, Jr.
K	Craig McIntosh*	Jr.	A steady, consistent kicker.	Joe Mansour, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Collins Ukwu*	Jr.	Coaching staff expecting a breakout year.	Nermin Delic, So.
DT	Luke McDermott	Sr.	He's an undersized but gritty walk-on.	Donte Rumph, So.
DT	Mister Cobble	So.	Can be an anchor in the middle.	Mark Crawford, Sr.
DE	Taylor Wyndham	Jr.	Team's best pure pass rusher.	Justin Henderson, Fr.
LB	Danny Trevathan*	Sr.	Makes plays all over the field.	Tim Patterson, Fr.
LB	Ronnie Sneed*	Sr.	Led team with five quarterback hurries.	Avery Williamson, So.
LB	Ridge Wilson	Jr.	Came on strong at end of 2010.	Qua Huzzie, So.
CB	Randall Burden*	Sr.	From UK pipeline in LaGrange (Ga.).	Anthony Mosley, Sr.*
CB	Martavious Neloms*	Jr.	Physical player made 55 tackles last season.	Cartier Rice, Jr.
SS	Winston Guy*	Sr.	Will also play linebacker in new defense.	Dakotah Tyler, So.
FS	Mychal Bailey*	Sr.	Should be better in second year out of JC.	Josh Gibbs, Sr.
P	Ryan Tydlacka*	Sr.	Has improved average each season.	Joe Mansour, So.

*Returning Starter

WILDCATS RECRUITING 2011

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Marcus Caffey
With standout Derrick Locke having moved on to the next level, there is a great opportunity at the running back spot in Lexington. That means Caffey will have a chance to impress coaches and earn early playing time when fall practice starts. Caffey is a big, powerful back who was considered one of the Wildcats' top pickups.

Glenn Faulkner
Far and away the most heralded member of the 2011 Kentucky class, Faulkner is a talented safety who was considered the No. 1 overall recruit in Illinois and No. 8 safety nationally. He has excellent size, athleticism and instincts, which makes him a prime target to get substantial action in 2011.

Maxwell Smith
To be frank, quarterback isn't Kentucky's strongest position, and that should allow Smith, who played high school football in California, to possibly push for playing time. An early enrollee, the 6-5, 220-pound Smith, a true pro-style quarterback, competed this spring and likely will be the top backup this fall.

THE SLEEPER

Bubba Tandy
Tandy didn't have many offers from BCS programs, but the truth is he's a versatile athlete who likely will see action at a number of positions during his Kentucky career. In the beginning, look for him to possibly line up at receiver. It also wouldn't be a shock for Tandy to return kicks in 2011.

Committments	24
Average Stars	2.96
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	1
★★★☆☆	21
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	71
National Rank: NR	SEC: 11

2012 NEEDS: Look for Kentucky to do its best to land a handful of offensive linemen, which is a great area of need. A year ago, the Wildcats inked three offensive linemen. In this cycle, that number could double as Kentucky looks to build as much depth up front as possible. On defense, the Wildcats are hoping to find some quality linebackers. After missing on a few players at that spot in the Class of 2011, it's now critical this need is addressed. Additionally, defensive tackle is another spot at which Kentucky could use help.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Marcus Caffey	RB	6-0	191	★★★	Atlanta, GA	Grady
Rated as the No. 26 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 running back... Rushed for 1,611 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior.						
Josh Clemons	RB	5-10	202	★★★	Fayetteville, GA	Whitewater
Rated as the No. 73 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 54 running back... Participated in the Georgia North-South All-Star Game...Rushed for 2,003 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior.						
Theltus Cobbins	QB	6-2	190	★★★	New Orleans, LA	McDonogh 35
Rated as the No. 35 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 dual-threat quarterback... Threw for 1,308 yards and 13 touchdowns and rushed for 266 yards and seven scores as a junior.						
Christian Coleman	DE	6-4	255	★★★	Milan, TN	Milan
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...First-team all-state selection in Class AAA...Recorded 116 tackles and five sacks as a senior...Participated in Tennessee East-West All-Star Game.						
Daryl Collins	WR	6-0	190	★★★	Gadsden, AL	Gadsden City
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 84 wide receiver... Participated in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Rashad Cunningham	WR	6-4	200	★★★	Mobile, AL	Davidson
Caught 39 passes for 555 yards and five touchdowns as a senior...Chose Kentucky over Arkansas, Memphis, Mississippi State, South Alabama and UAB.						
Nile Daniel	WR	6-0	185	★★★	Griffin, GA	Griffin
Rated as the No. 61 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com... Caught 31 passes for 600 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior.						
Eric Dixon	DB	5-11	175	★★★	Mobile, AL	Vigor
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 59 cornerback...Participated in the Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Alvin Dupree	TE	6-5	220	★★★	Irwinton, GA	Wilkinson County
Rated as the No. 59 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Saw time at tight end, H-back, wide receiver and defensive end in high school.						
James Elliott	OL	6-4	305	★★★	Pensacola, FL	Catholic
All-area selection as a senior...Participated in Subway East-West High School All-Star Game.						
Glenn Faulkner	DB	6-2	194	★★★★	East St. Louis, IL	East St. Louis
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 8 safety...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Recorded 63 tackles and three interceptions as a senior.						
Josh Forrest	TE	6-4	220	★★★	Paducah, KY	Tilghman
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com...Caught 46 passes for 855 yards and 14 touchdowns on offense as a senior and had seven interceptions on defense.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Daylen Hall	DB	5-9	170	★★★	Louisville, KY	St. Xavier
Intercepted 13 passes in his career, returning four for touchdowns...Second-team all-state selection.						
Farrington Huguenin	DE	6-5	245	★★	Charlotte, NC	North Carolina Tech
Recorded 76 tackles with five sacks and eight tackles for loss as a senior...Selected to compete in the DeKalb County All-Star Game...Enrolled at Kentucky in January.						
Shaq Love	DT	6-5	280	★★★	Harriman, TN	Harriman
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...First-team all-state selection as a senior...Also played basketball in high school.						
Ashely Lowery	DB	6-1	190	★★★	Cleveland, GA	White County
Rated as the No. 84 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 59 safety...Participated in the Georgia North-South All-Star Game.						
Darrian Miller	OL	6-6	275	★★★	Lexington, KY	Bryan Station
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 offensive tackle...Second-team all-state selection.						
Demarius Rancifer	LB	6-3	210	★★★	Pensacola, FL	Catholic
Rated as the nation's No. 44 outside linebacker by Rivals.com...Racked up 177 tackles as a senior after recording 124 tackles as a junior...Participated in the Subway East-West All-Star Game.						
Demarco Robinson	WR	5-10	170	★★★	Lithonia, GA	Martin Luther King
Rated as the No. 76 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com... Caught 73 passes for a state record 1,655 yards and 27 touchdowns as a senior...Participated in Georgia North-South All-Star Game.						
Maxwell Smith	QB	6-5	220	★★★	Van Nuys, CA	Birmingham
Threw for 2,500 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior...Named all-conference and all-city...Enrolled at Kentucky in January.						
Bubba Tandy	ATH	6-1	185	★★★	Hopkinsville, KY	Christian County
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com...Caught 102 passes for 1,615 yards and 14 touchdowns and rushed for close to 1,000 yards and 14 more scores during his career....Tied a state record with four punt return TDs in one game.						
Darrell Warren	DE	6-0	215	★★	Alcoa, TN	Alcoa
Named Class AA Mr. Football lineman...All-state selection as a junior and senior...Had 84 tackles with 26 tackles for loss and 16 sacks as a senior.						
David Washington	DE	6-3	270	★★★	Hampton, GA	Lovejoy
All-state selection as a senior and earned all-region honors as a junior and senior... Participated in the Georgia North-South All-Star Game.						
Zach West	OL	6-5	305	★★★	Lexington, KY	Lexington Christian Academy
Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 56 offensive tackle...First-team all-state selection as a junior and senior.						

WILDCATS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
87	Brian Adams	WR	6-4	223	So.	Gainesville, GA
53	Matthew Adolph	LS	6-2	210	Fr.	Dublin, OH
23	Edmund Allen Jr.	RB	5-11	194	Fr.	Elizabethtown
30	Michael Arnold	DB	6-2	189	Fr.	Louisville
86	Jordan Aumiller	TE	6-4	228	So.	Danville
41	Mychal Bailey	FS	6-0	186	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
31	Mikie Benton	CB	5-11	189	Jr.	Russellville
34	Ed Berry	WR	6-0	157	So.	Eminence
27	Aaron Boyd	WR	6-4	220	Jr.	Lexington
10	Tyler Brause	LB	6-4	224	Fr.	Sycamore, OH
17	Nik Brazley	WR	5-9	166	Sr.	Louisville
81	Kyle Budde	TE/LS	6-6	225	Fr.	Mason, OH
9	Michael Burchett	QB	6-2	198	Fr.	Prestonsburg
66	Chandler Burden	OT	6-4	300	Sr.	Blue Ash, OH
24	Randall Burden	CB	6-0	170	Sr.	LaGrange, GA
97	Mister Cobble	DT	6-0	338	So.	Louisville
84	Gabe Correll	TE	6-5	236	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
98	Mark Crawford	DT	6-1	324	Sr.	Indianapolis, IN
62	Tyler Davenport	OT	6-5	309	Fr.	Hodgenville
61	Alvin Davis Jr.	DE	6-4	254	Fr.	Jesup, GA
60	Nermin Delic	DE	6-5	265	So.	Dalton, GA
50	Mike Douglas	DE	6-4	253	Fr.	Largo, FL
73	Stephen Duff	OG	6-0	317	So.	Louisville
76	Teven Eatmon-Nared	OT	6-7	325	Fr.	Bucyrus, OH
56	Michael Edwards	LB	6-1	236	Jr.	Stanford
19	E.J. Fields	WR	6-1	195	Jr.	Frankfort
29	Brandon Gainer	TB	5-11	203	Fr.	Miami, FL
25	Jonathan George	TB	5-10	205	So.	Lincoln, AL
33	Josh Gibbs	FS	5-10	201	Sr.	Long Beach, CA
45	Antwane Glenn	DT	6-3	273	Sr.	Pacolet, S.C.
64	Max Godby	OG	6-4	272	Fr.	Louisville
21	Winston Guy Jr.	SS	6-1	210	Sr.	Lexington
90	Justin Henderson	DE	6-3	229	Fr.	Bamberg, S.C.
70	Stuart Hines	OG	6-4	296	Sr.	Bowling Green
37	Christian Hudnell	CB	6-0	174	So.	Cameron Park, CA
2	Qua Huzzie	LB	5-10	219	So.	LaGrange, GA
64	Lionel Inanzala	DT	6-3	283	Fr.	Louisville
47	Jabari Johnson	LB	6-1	261	Fr.	Stone Mountain, GA
51	Tristian Johnson	DE	6-1	270	So.	LaGrange, GA
37	Cody Jones	FB	5-11	208	So.	Williamsburg
36	Andrew Joseph	FB	5-10	231	So.	Marietta, GA
82	Anthony Kendrick	TE	6-3	261	So.	Katy, TX
16	La'Rod King	WR	6-4	204	Jr.	Radcliff
63	Jake Lanefski	OG/C	6-4	283	Sr.	Mobile, AL
91	Brice Laughlin	DT	6-3	324	Fr.	Summerville, S.C.
78	Jacob Lewellen	DE	6-3	248	Jr.	Louisville
95	Patrick Ligon	DT	6-4	249	So.	Germantown, TN
88	Joe Mansour	K/P	6-2	188	So.	LaGrange, GA
13	Gene McCaskill	WR	6-0	192	Jr.	Chester, S.C.
68	Luke McDermott	DT	6-1	265	Sr.	Louisville
54	Malcolm McDuffen	LB	6-3	205	Fr.	Hopkinsville
93	Craig McIntosh	K	6-0	208	Jr.	Lexington
42	Nick Melillo	TE	6-2	228	Sr.	Louisville
79	Kevin Mitchell	OG	6-6	310	So.	Winston, GA
14	Anthony Mosley	CB	6-0	176	Sr.	Ellenwood, GA
52	Billy Joe Murphy	OT	6-6	306	Sr.	Gamaliel
15	Martavius Neloms	CB	6-1	184	Jr.	Memphis, TN
12	Morgan Newton	QB	6-4	235	Jr.	Carmel, IN
78	David Noltemeyer	OG	6-4	285	Fr.	Louisville
43	Toba Omotinugbon	FB	6-0	233	Fr.	Jeffersonville, IN
44	Tim Patterson	LB	6-4	220	Fr.	Louisville
14	Ryan Phillippi	QB	5-11	179	So.	Lexington
1	Jerell Priester	CB	5-9	175	So.	Ulmer, S.C.
39	Jewell Ratliff	LB	6-1	242	So.	New Oreleans, LA
35	Cartier Rice	CB	5-10	181	Jr.	Duncan, S.C.
3	Matt Roark	WR	6-5	215	Sr.	Acworth, GA
89	Tyler Robinson	TE	6-3	254	So.	Friendsville, TN
99	Donte Rumph	DT	6-3	300	So.	St. Matthews, S.C.
17	Jacob Russell	QB	6-4	232	So.	Lawrenceburg
4	Raymond Sanders III	TB	5-8	198	So.	Stone Mountain, GA
80	Ronnie Shields	TE	6-5	239	Fr.	Stone Mountain, GA
38	Eric Simmons	CB	6-0	191	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
90	Patrick Simmons	K	6-2	205	Jr.	LaGrange, GA
32	Miles Simpson	SS	6-2	210	Fr.	Independence
56	Sam Simpson	C	6-4	284	So.	Lexington
69	Matt Smith	C	6-4	297	Jr.	Louisville
11	Maxwell Smith	QB	6-4	225	Fr.	Granada Hills, CA
6	Taiedo Smith	FS	6-0	184	Sr.	Dunnellon, FL
46	Ronnie Sneed	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Tallahassee, FL
35	William Tanner	WR	6-0	183	Fr.	Nashville, TN
57	Jon Thomas	LS	5-11	237	Sr.	Louisville
22	Danny Trevathan	LB	6-1	230	Sr.	Leesburg, FL
34	Dale Trimble	CB	5-10	160	Fr.	Gadsden, AL
9	Ryan Tydlacka	P/K	6-1	185	Sr.	Louisville
28	Dakotah Tyler	SS	5-11	194	So.	Indianapolis, IN
96	Collins Ukwu	DE	6-5	255	Jr.	La Vergne, TN
59	Dave Ulinski	OG	6-5	324	Jr.	Louisville
67	Larry Warford	OG	6-3	340	Jr.	Richmond
26	CoShik Williams	TB	5-9	182	Jr.	Hiram, GA
40	Avery Williamson	LB	6-1	223	So.	Milan, TN
48	Ridge Wilson	LB	6-3	238	Jr.	Louisville
53	Ben Wolfe	LB	5-11	202	Fr.	Villa Hills
74	Trevino Woods	OT	6-5	281	Jr.	Athens, GA
94	Taylor Wyndham	DE	6-4	250	Jr.	Swansea, S.C.

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
M. Hartline	12	146.4	268	405	9	66.2	3178	23	55	264.8
M. Newton	5	109.9	25	43	0	58.1	265	0	40	53.0

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
R. Cobb	13	84	1017	12.1	7	48	78.2
C. Matthews	13	61	925	15.2	9	55	71.2
L. King	13	36	478	13.3	5	47	36.8

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
D. Locke	9	166	919	32	887	5.3	10	83	98.6
R. Cobb	13	55	446	22	424	7.7	5	73	32.6
D. Russell	12	64	308	15	293	4.6	2	25	24.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: D. Trevathan 144, W. Guy 106, R. Sneed 61
Tackles for loss: D. Trevathan 16, T. Wyndham 6, two tied with 5.5
Sacks: D. Trevathan 3, L. McDermott 3, T. Wyndham 2.5
Interceptions: W. Guy 3, M. Bailey 2, four tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Brian Adams had himself quite a busy spring. He spent half of his time participating in spring football practice as a wide receiver for Kentucky. The rest of his time was devoted to the UK baseball team, where he moonlighted as a centerfielder.

And Adams isn't just a bit player in those sports. He was one of the stars of the Blue/White Spring Game, catching seven passes for 121 yards and two touchdowns, and he's a major hitting threat on the diamond.

Adams' rare combination of size and speed has served him well in both sports. He's a strapping 6-4, 223-pounder who runs a 4.4 40-yard dash. He was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in the summer of 2009 and figures to be drafted again when he becomes eligible.

Adams is starting to come into his own as a wide receiver, excelling in the spring despite participating in just half the practices.

"Brian's got a chance to be a big-time player here," coach **Joker Phillips** said. "It's now starting to kick in with him. He's now starting to understand the position."

• Phillips continued to put his personal stamp on the coaching staff in the offseason, as he brought in two of his long-time allies in **Rick Minter** and **Steve Pardue**.

Phillips served as assistant at Cincinnati in 1997-98 when Minter was the head coach there. And Phillips established a Kentucky recruiting pipeline at LaGrange (Ga.), where Pardue was head coach from 1994-2010, winning three state championships.

Phillips also welcomed back a couple of former Wildcat players in **Andre Woodson** and **Glenn Holt**, who will serve as student assistants.

Woodson lettered at quarterback from 2004-2007 and holds the school's career record for touchdown passes. Holt started 24 games at receiver from 2003-06 and spent four seasons in the NFL.

• UK started spring practice with seven tight ends, although that number dwindled to six once former standout prep recruit Alex Smith was dismissed from the team.

Senior **Nick Melillo** ended spring at No. 1, followed closely by sophomores **Jordan Aumiller** and **Tyler Robinson**. Phillips said the Wildcats figure to use a lot of two-tight end sets in 2011.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this season:** "Kentucky will be similar record-wise to what they have been, it just depends on whether they stay healthy. They'll be 4-8 to 8-4. The difference is whether they will be able to compete with Auburn and South Carolina and some of those teams. This year they will have a hard time being competitive against those teams, but they'll be good enough to win a lot of games they've been winning."

• **On missing Randall Cobb:** "That's been a huge dimension in their offense for three years, I mean a huge dimension. He did so many things. He played quarterback, wide receiver, ran the wildcat. He got a lot of touches a lot of different ways, which opened things for a lot of different people."

La'Rod King
Photo by Mark Cornelison/Lexington Herald-Leader/MCT via Getty Images

sets. Junior Ridge Wilson is an outside linebacker by trade, but Minter will have him put his hand on the ground and play defensive end occasionally to bolster the Cats' pass rush.

"They're the X-factors," Minter said of Guy and Wilson. "With those guys on the edge, we can be pretty athletic and pretty forceful."

Kentucky still has to get its rotation settled up front. Junior end Collins Ukwu had a good spring, and Phillips expects him to blossom. Taylor Wyndham, perhaps the team's best pure pass rusher last season, is another wild card who could see time at end, tackle and outside linebacker.

Phillips is hoping this is the year he gets production out of sophomore Mister Cobble at tackle. At 6-0, 321 pounds, Cobble has the size and athletic ability to be a plugger in the middle but has played only one game in his career. He redshirted in 2009 and missed most of last season due to academics before making a cameo appearance in the bowl game.

"He can be as good as he wants to be," defensive line coach David Turner said. "It's all up to him."

One player whose role won't change much is Danny Trevathan, who will anchor the defense at weakside linebacker. The 6-1, 223-pound Trevathan has the explosiveness to make plays upfield and sideline-to-sideline.

Senior Ronnie Sneed returns to man the middle. Linebacker depth will be provided by sophomores Qua Huzzie and Avery Williamson.

UK has plenty of experience in the secondary, as Guy, free safety Mychal Bailey and cornerbacks Martavius Neloms, Randall Burden and Anthony Mosley all started multiple games last season. Keep an eye on Neloms, a hard hitter who also will see time at safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kentucky should be in good hands in the punting and place-kicking departments. Senior Ryan Tydlacka averaged 43.8 yards per punt last year, while junior Craig McIntosh connected on 11 of 15 field-goal attempts. McIntosh and sophomore Joe Mansour will compete for kickoff duties.

The biggest issue will be replacing Randall Cobb and Derrick Locke on kickoff and punt returns; both were

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Danny Trevathan

Trevathan combines top-flight speed with outstanding instincts and a nose for the ball. ... Became the first linebacker in Kentucky history to earn first-team All-America honors. ... Led the SEC in tackles in 2010 with 144. ... Second in the SEC in forced fumbles with four. .. Had a career-high 17 tackles vs. Auburn last season. ... Bypassed the NFL draft to return for his senior season. ... Added 15 pounds of muscle in the offseason.

EMERGING STAR

OL Larry Warford

Named second-team All-SEC by league coaches. ... Led the team in knockdown blocks with 43. ... Helped limit standout Auburn defensive tackle Nick Fairley to three tackles and no sacks. ... Part of an offensive line that ranked second in the league in fewest sacks allowed. ... Member of the SEC All-Freshman Team in 2009.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Maxwell Smith

Enrolled in December 2010 and participated in spring practice. ... Coaches like his size, arm strength, and work ethic. ... Will serve as Morgan Newton's backup as a true freshman. ... Scored a 1,480 on his SAT. ... Former Chicago Bears QB Erik Kramer served as his personal quarterback coach.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.6	87
Rushing	127.5	81
Passing	171.9	96
Total	299.3	106
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.5	35
Rushing	139.2	55
Passing	193.2	40
Total	332.4	40
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.38	35

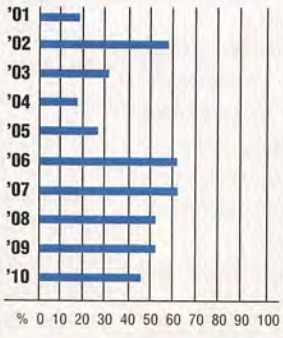
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.1	69
Rushing	191.2	21
Passing	140.3	114
Total	331.5	93
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.7	43
Rushing	182.9	100
Passing	176.8	17
Total	359.7	53
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.15	51

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.2	34
Rushing	158.5	53
Passing	269.3	23
Total	427.9	27
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.4	72
Rushing	177.1	85
Passing	177.1	14
Total	354.2	45
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.31	75

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

6-7, 2-6

W	at Louisville	23-16
W	WESTERN KENTUCKY	63-28
W	AKRON	47-10
L	at Florida	14-48
L	at Ole Miss	35-42
L	AUBURN	34-37
W	SOUTH CAROLINA	31-28
L	GEORGIA	31-44
L	at Mississippi State	17-24
W	CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	49-21
W	VANDERBILT	38-20
L	at Tennessee	14-24
	BBVA Compass Bowl	
L	vs. Pittsburgh	10-27

PLAYER PROFILE

Morgan Newton
Photo Michael Wade

It Took a While, But It's Newton's Show Now

Morgan Newton's time has finally come.

Newton thought he'd have a good chance to start as a true freshman when he arrived in Lexington as a touted prospect who earned Mr. Football honors in the state of Indiana.

Instead, he had to wait until Mike Hartline was sidelined by a knee injury before being inserted into the lineup for the final eight games of 2009.

Newton's time on the field was even more scarce last season, as he was beaten out by Hartline in fall camp and saw his only significant action in the BBVA Compass Bowl while Hartline was serving a suspension.

With Hartline out of eligibility, and Ryan Mossakowski deciding to transfer, Newton is the unquestioned starter heading into 2011.

While that might have seemed like a risky proposition after Newton's uneven performance in the bowl loss to Pittsburgh, he answered a lot of questions with a solid spring. He looked comfortable in the huddle, seemed in better command of the offense and threw the ball much more accurately than in the past.

Newton said knowing that he is indeed "the man" helped his productivity.

"It's nice to know that you can go out there in practice and make a couple of mistakes and not worry about getting jerked out," Newton said. "Just being able to go out there, play, make mistakes and learn from them and get that cohesiveness with the first team is great."

Getting more reps in practice helped Newton get a full grasp on the offense, one reason he believes his passing has improved.

"Sometimes when you know more about the offense and know where the ball's supposed to be, you throw a better ball because your body's ready," Newton said.

Newton is also benefiting from the return of ex-UK standout QB Andre Woodson, who joined the staff as a student assistant in the offseason. Woodson struggled in his first couple of years on campus before blossoming as a junior, and coach Joker Phillips thinks Newton could take a similar career path.

"Physically, Morgan's ahead of where Andre was at the same stage," Phillips said. "He didn't have a redshirt year like Andre, so he's not quite where Andre was mentally, but hopefully he can have the same kind of outcome Andre did."

Offensive coordinator Randy Sanders said he never lost confidence in Newton.

"He just had to be patient and wait for his time to come," Sanders said. "Now that it's here, he's handling himself like a starting quarterback. He's more involved in practice; he's trying to become a leader. We'll be fine with Morgan."

capable of taking it to the house. Randall Burden, Raymond Sanders and Martavius Neloms auditioned in the spring, and several freshmen will get an opportunity in fall camp.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

As is the case almost every year, the Wildcats will have to take care of business during the non-conference portion of its schedule if they want go bowling for a sixth straight year.

It won't be a cakewalk. The Cats open with Western Kentucky, who finished just 2-10 last year. But second-year coach Willie Taggart seems to have things moving in the right direction, and with the game being played on a Thursday night at Nashville's LP Field, the Hilltoppers should have plenty of fan support.

Next comes Central Michigan, and while the Chippewas had a down year in 2010, they do have a winning tradition, and the Wildcats have typically struggled with teams from the Mid-American Conference.

Arch-rival Louisville visits Commonwealth Stadium on Sept. 17.

The SEC schedule is brutal as always, with daunting road trips to LSU, South Carolina and Georgia. The key stretch of the season, and one that could determine Kentucky's fate, is the back-to-back home games with Mississippi State and Ole Miss on Oct. 29 and Nov. 5

— Chip Cosby

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 1	Western Kentucky	2-10
Sept. 10	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	3-9
Sept. 17	LOUISVILLE	7-6
Sept. 24	FLORIDA	8-5
Oct. 1	at LSU	11-2
Oct. 8	at South Carolina	9-5
Oct. 22	JACKSONVILLE STATE	9-3
Oct. 29	MISSISSIPPI STATE	9-4
Nov. 5	OLE MISS	4-8
Nov. 12	at Vanderbilt	2-10
Nov. 19	at Georgia	6-7
Nov. 26	TENNESSEE	6-7

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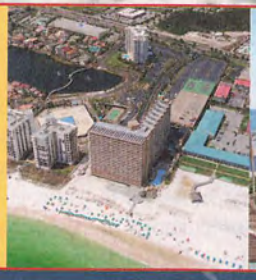

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LSU TIGERS

For more coverage of the Tigers, visit lsu.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Kragthorpe | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Chavis** | **STADIUM: Tiger Stadium: 92,400**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
11-2, 6-2 SEC (T-2nd, West)

COACH:
Les Miles — At LSU: 62-17, 6 years; overall: 90-38, 10 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 8 offense, 7 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Jordan Jefferson, WR Rueben Randle, TE Deangelo Peterson, RB Spencer Ware, LB Ryan Baker, LB Stefoin Francois, CB Morris Claiborne, CB Tyrann Mathieu

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Blessed with depth and talent, the Tigers have an experienced receiving corps and a veteran quarterback. Ware leads a productive running attack behind a punishing line. The gifted secondary appears to be the backbone of a defense that features speed and aggressiveness throughout its front seven.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Special teams took a major hit with the loss of its place-kicker, punter and return man — all of whom combined to win more than their share of games. Gone, too, are last year's leading rusher and tackler. It's imperative the Tigers find others to make up for the rushing yards and defensive stops they lost.

KEY LOSSES:
DB Patrick Peterson, RB Stevan Ridley, WR Terrence Toliver, DT Drake Nevis, LB Kelvin Sheppard

OVERVIEW:
Skill is in large supply, but several losses at important positions means new leadership is necessary to foster the chemistry that a championship team needs. A new coordinator figures to give the offense a much-needed jump-start as it looks to complement a defense that at times has been unduly burdened. A tough schedule awaits, but LSU has the goods to handle it.

Offense's Small Strides Could Mean Big Gains for LSU

Now that LSU has played its way back into prominence, coach Les Miles doesn't want the Tigers to deviate from the formula that allowed them to recover from the two lackluster seasons that followed their 2007 BCS national championship.

"The point is to improve this team and to really focus on the specifics that can be repeated and repeated and repeated to give them an advantage," Miles said of his intentions leading up to his much-anticipated seventh season.

"We want to really focus on not necessarily the wrinkles, but the bread and butter."

Miles buttered the bread a year ago and in his unorthodox manner, molded a team that capped its 11-2 record with an impressive 41-24 victory over Texas A&M in the Cotton Bowl.

That singular achievement raised expectations, particularly since quarterback Jordan Jefferson, now a senior, passed for three touchdowns and ran for another against the Aggies. What's more, sophomore running back Spencer Ware rushed 10 times for 102 yards.

Ware is the heir apparent to Stevan Ridley, last year's leading rusher and the most notable loss on offense, which now is under the command of new coordinator Steve Kragthorpe. The defense will be without highly decorated cornerback Patrick Peterson and linebacker Kelvin Sheppard, last year's leading tackler.

Despite the absences, LSU returns seven starters on defense, including two experienced linebackers and a secondary that has the wherewithal to flourish without Peterson. Kragthorpe takes over an offense with eight starters back.

"I think Les and I are on the same page," said Kragthorpe, who stepped in after Gary Crowton left for Maryland. "I think our philosophies mesh very, very well in terms of wanting to be a power running football team and couple that with a great, downfield, quick-strike passing game."

The hope is to increase the offensive production and not rely so heavily on the defense and special teams that rescued the Tigers so often last season. Not only will LSU be without Peterson's return skills, but game-winning place-kicker Josh Jasper is gone, as is punter Derek Helton.

That may seem like a tall order to fill, but optimism abounds given how LSU responded with six Southeastern Conference victories after having combined for just eight in the previous two years.

OFFENSE

LSU won a lot of games last season despite an offense that ranked 11th in the SEC (341.3 yards per game) and a passing attack mired in last (155.6 yards per game).

Imagine the possibilities with some improvement.

More than imagination, the Tigers are bent on producing results. Steve Kragthorpe, as first-year coordinator, has plenty to work with, starting with a veteran quarterback.

As a three-year starter, Jordan Jefferson is the winningest active SEC quarterback with a 20-7 record. He completed 118 of 209 passes for 1,411 yards last season, but he also threw just four regular-season touchdown passes with nine interceptions.

Kragthorpe's task is to get Jefferson back on track with the help of a stable of productive running backs, a potent receiving corps and a veteran offensive line. Miles expects the former Louisville and Tulsa head coach to get the job done.

Morris Claiborne
Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

"I think he is an attention-to-detail type of guy," Miles said of Kragthorpe. "He knows how an attack gets put together. ... I think our players will enjoy him, his expertise and his view of offense."

The Tigers have endured an embarrassing goal-line fiasco in each of the past two years. LSU had apparently lost to Tennessee last year only to have its confusion prompt the Vols to have too many men on the field for what should have been the final play.

Given a reprieve, Miles, without the help of any assistants, called a play ... and Stevan Ridley carried the ball into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown. With Ridley gone, Spencer Ware is primed to become the focal point of LSU's running attack.

Ware's Cotton Bowl performance followed a regular season in which he rushed only 14 times for 73 yards. Ware carried the momentum of his postseason effort into the spring game, when he rushed for two touchdowns and amassed 144 all-purpose yards.

Behind Ware are sophomores Michael Ford and Alfred Blue, who combined to start three games and run for four touchdowns last season. For good measure, true freshman Kenny Hilliard is the nephew of former LSU and New Orleans Saints standout Dalton Hilliard.

Junior Rueben Randle is the top returning wide receiver with 544 receiving yards and three touchdowns. Senior Deangelo Peterson may well move from tight end to wide receiver after catching 16 passes for 198 yards and also executing a critical reverse against Alabama that went for 23 yards.

In last year's season opener, junior Russell Shepard became the first LSU receiver since 2006 to catch a touchdown pass and run for a score in the same game.

Providing protection will be a line that returns all but one starter. Senior right guard T-Bob Hebert, son of former NFL quarterback Bobby Hebert, produced a team-high 72 knockdowns.

DEFENSE

Cornerback Patrick Peterson was such a dominating presence that his absence should finally allow others to get their just due. It also will show that LSU has a secondary that can flourish without last year's most visible member.

Junior cornerback Morris Claiborne actually led LSU in interceptions and was third in the SEC with five picks. He tied for fourth in the conference with 11 passes defended.

Sophomore Tyrann Mathieu is slated to replace Peterson after a stupendous first season in which he recorded 57 total tackles, including 4.5 sacks, forced five fumbles, recovered three and intercepted two passes.

Sophomore free safety Eric Reid

Ryan Baker
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jordan Jefferson*	Sr.	Poised to make use of his veteran leadership.	Zach Mettenberger, So.
RB	Spencer Ware	So.	Prepared to duplicate his Cotton Bowl performance.	Michael Ford, So.
FB	James Stampley*	Sr.	Led way for 1,000-yard rusher last season.	J.C. Copeland, So.
WR	Rueben Randle*	Jr.	Excelled against some of last year's toughest teams.	Kadron Boone, So.
WR	Russell Shepard*	Jr.	Tremendous runner after the catch.	James Wright, So.
TE	Deangelo Peterson	Sr.	Can return to wide receiver if needed.	Chase Clement, Jr.
LT	Chris Faulk	So.	Had 26 knockdowns in 177 plays last year.	Evan Washington, Fr.
LG	Josh Dworaczyk*	Sr.	Played every offensive snap in nine games last year.	Matt Branch, Jr.
C	P.J. Lonergan*	Jr.	One of the strongest players on the team.	T-Bob Hebert, Sr.
RG	T-Bob Hebert*	Sr.	His versatility increases his value.	Will Blackwell, Sr.
RT	Alex Hurst*	Jr.	Missed tail end of season with a leg injury.	Greg Shaw, Sr.
K	Drew Alleman	Jr.	Walk-on who must replace record-setting kicker.	Chris Barnes, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Kendrick Adams*	Sr.	Had at least one tackle in 11 of 12 regular-season games.	Barkevious Mingo, So.
DT	Josh Downs	Jr.	Aggressive player with a quick first step.	Anthony Johnson, Fr.
DT	Michael Brockers	So.	Continues to make steady improvement.	Ego Ferguson, Fr.
DE	Sam Montgomery	So.	Fully recovered from season-ending knee injury.	Lavar Edwards, Jr.*
LB	Ryan Baker*	Sr.	Was hardly slowed by broken jaw last year.	Lamin Barrow, So.
LB	Stefoin Francois*	Sr.	Broke up final-play pass in win over North Carolina.	D.J. Welter, Fr.
LB	Karnell Hatcher*	Sr.	Hard hitter who moved from free safety.	Tahj Jones, So.
CB	Morris Claiborne*	Jr.	Second-team All-SEC selection; had five INTs.	Ron Brooks, Sr.
CB	Tyrann Mathieu	So.	A gifted playmaker with great instincts.	Tharold Simon, So.
SS	Brandon Taylor*	Sr.	His 2010 season was cut short by a leg injury.	Craig Loston, So.
FS	Eric Reid	So.	His father is a former LSU hurdles champion.	Ronnie Vinson, Fr.
P	Brad Wing	Fr.	Kicked a 73-yard field goal in high school.	D.J. Howard, Sr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

La'El Collins
In a star-studded Tigers recruiting class, Collins was the biggest prize. A consensus five-star prospect, the standout offensive tackle should see action this fall. In fact, he just might start. LSU loses its only offensive line starter from 2010 at left tackle. Collins arrives in August to make his push.

Anthony Johnson
Having good defensive tackles in the SEC is an absolute must. And in Johnson, the Tigers landed a dominant five-star recruit whose nickname — "the Freak" — seems fitting. A terror in the middle because of his quickness, strength and aggressiveness, Johnson should contend for a starting spot.

Zach Mettenberger
After starting his college career at Georgia, Mettenberger landed at LSU following a stint at Butler (Kan.) Community College. For now, Jordan Jefferson is the Tigers starting quarterback, but Mettenberger, who can extend a defense vertically, is the type of passer LSU hasn't had the past few seasons.

THE SLEEPER

Trevon Randle
A three-star linebacker prospect from Texas, Randle arguably is the most underrated member of the Tigers' 2011 recruiting class. An outside backer, Randle is both good against the run and the pass. He has the speed and footwork to drop into coverage, not to mention excellent ball skills.

Committments	23
Average Stars	3.49
★★★★★	3
★★★★☆	9
★★★☆☆	9
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	80
National Rank: 6	SEC: 3

2012 NEEDS: Like most schools, LSU hopes to land a decent amount of offensive linemen. Most important, it seems, is that the Tigers land a true center. That's a spot where they have a great need. Unfortunately for LSU, there just aren't a ton of great centers in the class of 2012. Because of that, the Tigers may have to go the junior college route to fill that need. While LSU isn't hurting at either position, the Tigers also will be looking to land big-timers at wide receiver and linebacker.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jonah Austin	OL	6-7	305	★★★	New Orleans, LA	St. Augustine
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 58 offensive tackle...All-State selection as a senior.						
Odell Beckham Jr.	WR	5-10	165	★★★★	New Orleans, LA	Isidore Newman School
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 6 wide receiver...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Jalen Collins	DB	6-2	180	★★★★	Olive Branch, MS	Olive Branch
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 22 cornerback...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
La' El Collins	OL	6-5	285	★★★★★	Baton Rouge, LA	Redemptorist
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 2 offensive tackle...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
Micah Eugene	DB	5-11	190	★★★	Lafayette, LA	Acadiana
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 63 cornerback...Earned Louisiana 5A All-State honors as a senior.						
James Hairston	K	6-1	200	★★	Dallas, TX	Jesuit
Rated as the nation's No. 15 kicker by Rivals.com...Connected on 11-of-16 field goal attempts as a senior and 6-of-6 as a junior.						
Kenny Hilliard	RB	6-0	218	★★★★	Patterson, LA	Patterson
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 9 running back...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Rushed for 8,603 yards and 106 touchdowns during high school career.						
David Jenkins	DB	6-1	185	★★★★	Carrollton, TX	Hebron
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 31 prospect in Texas...Rated as the nation's No. 21 cornerback...Had 49 tackles, 11 pass breakups and four interceptions as a senior.						
Anthony Johnson	DT	6-4	298	★★★★★	New Orleans, LA	O. Perry Walker
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 1 defensive tackle...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at LSU in January.						
Mickey Johnson	DT	6-1	310	★★★★	Covington, LA	St. Paul's
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 17 defensive tackle...Recorded 50 tackles and 11 sacks as a senior.						
Jarvis Landry	WR	5-11	178	★★★★★	Lutcher, LA	Lutcher
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 4 wide receiver...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Alonzo Lewis	WR	6-3	192	★★★	St. James, LA	St. James
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 92 wide receiver...Had 21 catches for 596 yards and five touchdowns as a senior.						
Terrance Magee	ATH	5-9	190	★★★	Franklinton, LA	Franklinton
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 28 athlete...Threw for 2,634 yards and 35 touchdowns...Rushed for 1,370 yards and 19 TDs on 161 carries as a senior.						
Ronald Martin	DB	6-2	190	★★★	White Castle, LA	White Castle
Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 60 cornerback...Had nine interceptions and 15 pass breakups as a senior.						
Zach Mettenberger	QB	6-5	245	★★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler County C.C.
Rated as the nation's No. 17 junior college prospect by Rivals.com...Began his career at Georgia...Enrolled at LSU in January.						
Jerrard Randall	QB	6-2	189	★★★★	Hollywood, FL	Chaminade Madonna
Rated as the No. 47 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 10 dual-threat quarterback...Late addition to the LSU class...A one-time commitment to Oregon, Randall chose LSU over Miami, Connecticut, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech and Marshall.						
Trevon Randle	LB	6-1	205	★★★	League City, TX	Clear Springs
Rated as the No. 46 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 17 outside linebacker...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Jermauria Rasco	DE	6-3	227	★★★★	Shreveport, LA	Evangel Christian
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 8 weakside defensive end...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Stephen Rivers	QB	6-6	200	★★★	Athens, AL	Athens
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 pro-style quarterback...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Brother of San Diego Chargers QB Philip Rivers.						
Quentin Thomas	DE	6-3	265	★★★	Breaux Bridge, LA	Breaux Bridge
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 strongside defensive end...Missed his senior season.						
Paul Turner	ATH	5-11	190	★★★	West Monroe, LA	West Monroe
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 athlete...Led team to state title as a junior.						
Trai Turner	OL	6-5	340	★★★★	New Orleans, LA	St. Augustine
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 14 offensive guard.						
Corey White	OL	6-5	280	★★★★	Baton Rouge, LA	Capitol
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Louisiana...Rated as the nation's No. 11 offensive guard...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
94	Kendrick Adams	DE	6-5	255	Sr.	Enterprise, AL
87	Chancey Aghayere	DE	6-4	268	Jr.	Garland, TX
27	Dexter Alexander	DB	5-9	174	So.	Baton Rouge
30	Drew Alleman	PK/P	5-11	182	Jr.	Lafayette
98	Jordan Allen	DE	6-6	252	Fr.	West Monroe
	Jonah Austin	OL	6-5	320	Fr.	New Orleans
22	Ryan Baker	LB	6-0	227	Sr.	Grand Ridge, FL
38	Graham Ball	PK	5-9	172	Fr.	Lynn Haven, FL
	Chris Barnes	PK	-		So.	Slidell
57	Lamin Barrow	LB	6-2	221	So.	Marrero
	Odell Beckham, Jr.	WR	5-11	175	Fr.	New Orleans
62	Robert Blackmon	OL	6-1	220	Fr.	Burkburnett, TX
60	Will Blackwell	OG	6-4	303	Sr.	West Monroe
4	Alfred Blue	RB	6-2	207	So.	Boutte
69	Alex Bonnette	OT	6-2	271	So.	LaPlace
86	Kadron Boone	WR	6-0	202	So.	Ocala, FL
79	Matt Branch	OG	6-6	287	Jr.	Monroe
90	Michael Brockers	DT	6-6	300	So.	Houston, TX
13	Ron Brooks	CB	6-0	179	Sr.	Irving, TX
36	Derrick Bryant	S	5-11	199	Sr.	Lawrenceville, GA
63	Allen Buniger	OL	6-3	257	Fr.	New Orleans
17	Morris Claiborne	CB	6-0	177	Jr.	Shreveport
88	Chase Clement	TE	6-5	261	Jr.	Thibodaux
	Jalen Collins	S	6-1	180	Fr.	Olive Branch, MS
	La'el Collins	OL	6-4	315	Fr.	Baton Rouge
44	J.C. Copeland	FB	6-1	275	So.	LaGrange, GA
50	Joey Crappell	SNP	6-2	245	Sr.	Patterson
91	Chris Davenport	DT	6-4	311	So.	Mansfield
36	Cleveland Davis	RB	6-0	260	So.	Baton Rouge
21	Tayler Debusk	DB	5-11	180	Jr.	Tupelo, MS
19	David Detz	DB	6-0	177	Jr.	Leesville
41	Travis Dickson	TE	6-3	243	Fr.	Ocean Springs, MS
61	Ben Domingue	C	6-3	276	So.	Lafayette
77	Josh Downs	DT	6-1	278	Jr.	Bastrop
40	Rockey Duplessis	S	6-1	200	So.	Belle Chasse
68	Josh Dworaczyk	OG	6-6	295	Sr.	New Iberia
89	Lavar Edwards	DE	6-5	265	Jr.	Gretna
47	Tyler Edwards	TE	6-4	250	Jr.	Monroe
	Micah Eugene	S	5-11	185	Fr.	Lafayette
76	Chris Faulk	OT	6-6	316	So.	Slidell
9	Ego Ferguson	DL	6-3	286	Fr.	Frederick, Md.
5	Jarrett Fobbs	WR	5-11	185	Fr.	Shreveport
42	Michael Ford	RB	5-10	202	So.	Leesville
55	Cameron Fordham	C	6-3	261	Fr.	Duluth, GA
23	Stefoin Francois	LB	6-1	215	Sr.	Reserve
56	Seth Fruge	LB	5-11	200	So.	Welsh
87	Josh Gast	TE	6-3	211	Jr.	Covington
29	Sam Gibson	S	6-1	205	Fr.	Prattville, AL
42	Tyler Glynn	DB	6-0	200	So.	West Monroe
3	Jakhari Gore	WR	5-9	175	Fr.	Miami, FL
	James Hairston	P	5-11	175	Fr.	Dallas, TX
48	Jarrett Hardnett	LB	6-2	227	So.	Baton Rouge
37	Karnell Hatcher	S	6-2	212	Sr.	Delray Beach, FL
16	Trent Hebert	DB	5-9	190	Sr.	Cecilia
53	T-Bob Hebert	C/OG	6-3	280	Sr.	Norcross, GA
27	Kenny Hilliard	RB	5-11	225	Fr.	Patterson
33	DJ Howard	P	6-3	192	Sr.	Baton Rouge
72	Alex Hurst	OT	6-6	329	Jr.	Bartlett, TN
84	Nic Jacobs	TE	6-5	265	Fr.	Many
9	Jordan Jefferson	QB	6-5	224	Sr.	St. Rose
	David Jenkins	CB	6-1	179	Fr.	Jena
39	Josh Johns	LB	6-2	206	So.	Baton Rouge
56	Anthony Johnson	DT	6-3	294	Fr.	New Orleans
97	Dennis Johnson	DT	6-2	287	Sr.	Amory, MS
	Mickey Johnson	DT	5-11	310	Fr.	Covington
73	A'Trey-U Jones	DL	6-0	271	So.	Tickfaw
58	Tahj Jones	LB	6-2	205	So.	Sulphur
83	Mitch Joseph	TE	6-5	265	Sr.	New Iberia
49	Austin Kinchen	SNP	6-2	208	Jr.	Baton Rouge
46	Hunter Kinchen	SNP	6-0	175	Fr.	Baton Rouge
	Jarvis Landry	WR	5-11	190	Fr.	Lutcher
80	Jeffrey Lang	DB	5-11	188	Fr.	Benton
12	Jarrett Lee	QB	6-2	207	Sr.	Brenham, TX
	Alonzo Lewis	WR	6-3	205	Fr.	St. James
93	Bennie Logan	DT	6-3	280	So.	Coushatta
64	P.J. Lonergan	C	6-4	300	Jr.	New Orleans
6	Craig Loston	S	6-2	200	So.	Houston, TX
54	Justin Maclin	DE	6-4	230	So.	Memphis, TN
	Terrence Magee	RB	5-9	205	Fr.	Franklinton
51	Seth Mannon	PK	6-6	215	Fr.	Houston, TX
	Ronald Martin	S	6-1	182	Fr.	White Castle
7	Tyrann Mathieu	DB	5-9	180	So.	New Orleans
8	Zach Mettenberger	QB	6-5	250	So.	Watkinsville, GA
49	Barkevious Mingo	DE	6-5	237	So.	West Monroe
46	Kevin Minter	LB	6-1	225	So.	Suwanee, GA
99	Sam Montgomery	DE	6-4	245	So.	Greenwood, SC
52	Luke Muncie	LB	6-3	223	So.	Klein, TX
43	Connor Neighbors	RB	5-10	237	So.	Huntsville, AL
47	Jeremy Peeples	TE	6-4	240	So.	Selma, AL
19	Deangelo Peterson	TE	6-4	243	Sr.	New Orleans
2	Rueben Randle	WR	6-4	207	Jr.	Bastrop
	Trevon Randle	LB	6-1	205	Fr.	League City, TX
	Jermauria Rasco	DE	6-4	240	Fr.	Shreveport
1	Eric Reid	S	6-2	207	So.	Geismar
10	Nick Rice	LB	6-1	219	So.	Coppell, TX
	Stephen Rivers	QB	6-7	198	Fr.	Athens, AL
85	Alex Russian	SNP	6-5	240	Sr.	Round Rock, TX
75	Greg Shaw	OT	6-5	295	Sr.	Hialeah, FL
10	Russell Shepard	WR	6-1	188	Jr.	Houston, TX
24	Tharold Simon	DB	6-3	190	So.	Eunice
66	Riley Siniard	OL	6-4	275	Fr.	Huntsville, AL
33	Jason Slaydon	FB	5-9	198	So.	Westlake
39	Kendric Smith	TE	6-3	218	Fr.	Harker Heights, TX
35	Ryan St. Julien	CB	6-1	185	Jr.	St. Martinville
35	James Stampley	FB	5-10	230	Sr.	Baker
43	Tre' Sullivan	DB	5-9	179	Fr.	Donaldsonville
15	Brandon Taylor	S	6-0	195	Sr.	Franklinton
48	Kellen Theriot	FB	6-1	234	Jr.	Houston, TX
45	Patrick Thomas	DB	5-10	180	So.	Shreveport
	Quentin Thomas	DE	6-3	276	Fr.	Breaux Bridge
21	Chris Tolliver	WR	6-1	178	Jr.	Rayville
	Paul Turner	ATH	5-11	185	Fr.	West Monroe
	Trai Turner	OL	6-2	334	Fr.	New Orleans
28	Ronnie Vinson	DB	5-11	187	Fr.	New Orleans
11	Spencer Ware	RB	5-11	225	So.	Cincinnati, Ohio
70	Evan Washington	OT	6-5	315	Fr.	DeSoto, TX
32	Chris Wells	DB	5-11	186	So.	Frierson
31	D.J. Welter	LB	6-0	226	Fr.	Crowley
	Corey White	OL	6-3	333	Fr.	Baton Rouge
81	Armand Williams	WR	6-3	195	Fr.	Slidell
40	Tabari Williams	RB	5-10	173	So.	Hiram, GA
74	Josh Williford	OG	6-7	324	So.	Dothan, AL
23	B.J. Wilson	RB	5-9	184	Jr.	New Orleans
38	Brad Wing	P	6-3	175	Fr.	Melbourne, Australia
82	James Wright	WR	6-2	197	So.	Belle Chasse

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Jefferson	13	114.7	118	209	10	56.5	1411	7	75	108.5
J. Lee	12	119.9	54	89	1	60.7	573	2	47	47.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Toliver	13	41	579	14.1	5	42	44.5
R. Randle	13	33	544	16.5	3	75	41.8
R. Shepard	13	33	254	7.7	1	22	19.5

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
S. Ridley	13	249	1187	40	1147	4.6	15	65	88.2
J. Jefferson	13	123	607	157	450	3.7	7	83	34.6
M. Ford	10	45	266	22	244	5.4	3	36	24.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Sheppard 116, R. Baker 87, K Hatcher 64
Tackles for loss: D. Nevis 13, K. Sheppard 11, R. Baker 11
Sacks: R. Baker 7, D. Nevis 6, T. Mathieu 4.5
Interceptions: M. Claiborne 5, Pa. Peterson 4, two tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

In a self-imposed disciplinary measure, LSU took away two scholarships from its 2011-12 recruiting class and reduced the number of official visits for the past academic year.

The action came in response to NCAA violations LSU found during its own investigation in 2009. The initial probe centered on former coach D.J. McCarthy, who has since resigned, and defensive lineman Akiem Hicks, who left the team after one year without playing.

In March, LSU officially responded to an NCAA Notice of Allegations that it had received three months earlier. The notice contained seven allegations.

• Freshman punter **Brad Wing**, 21, spent 15 years playing Australian Rules Football in his native country before moving to Baton Rouge.

In his only year of playing American football, Wing averaged 41.8 yards per punt at Parkview Baptist High School last season. Wing is slated to replace the departed Derek Helton as LSU's primary punter.

Wing's father, David, punted for the Detroit Lions of the NFL and the Scottish Claymores of NFL Europe.

• Two days after the spring game, sophomore running back **Spencer Ware** rejoined the baseball team as an outfielder. Ware began the spring with the baseball team as a pinch runner and backup before devoting his time to spring football practice.

• Coach **Les Miles'** penchant for chewing on a blade of grass, as he did against Alabama, earned him a spot on the summer premier of Spike TV's Sod Wars.

Miles was invited by executive producer Bob Sacamano to be a celebrity judge and a participant in a sod taste test challenge.

The judges were to decide which of two homeowners had the best yard in the neighborhood after the homeowners were given $10,000 and a week to beautify their yards.

"This opportunity came about at the right time," Miles said." I take pride in both of my yards — the one at my house and the one in Tiger Stadium."

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this year's team:** "I think if LSU will run the ball and play-action (pass), and if the quarterback is good enough to throw when they have to, they can win it all. If they play offense the way Tennessee did when it won the national championship in 1998, LSU can win it all because they always have great players on defense."

• **On the offense:** "In the past LSU did not have a personality on offense, it's been a hodgepodge. If they can settle in and develop a personality on offense, being tough hard-nosed, I can't see any reason they can't run the table. I was not a big Gary Crowton fan (the former LSU offensive coordinator who was replaced by Steve Kragthorpe in the off-season.)"

• **On Les Miles:** "Les Miles keeps the bus on road. I do think he's underrated because people focus on other stuff. He has sustained it."

Russell Shepard
Photo by Chuck Cook-US PRESSWIRE

played in every game and started three after replacing senior Brandon Taylor, whose season ended because of a leg injury after nine starts and 44 total tackles.

"I think our secondary is going to have numbers (and) going to have competition," Miles said. "I think that's going to benefit us."

A secondary often can only be as good as the pressure provided up front. In that regard, LSU should do well with a line that lost two valuable tackles but returns a healthy dose of aggressive athletes.

"It appears to me that inside group will be pretty strong," Miles said.

LSU will look to the likes of sophomore Michael Brockers, junior Josh Downs, sophomore Bennie Logan, redshirt freshman Ego Ferguson and true freshman Anthony Johnson for support.

Brockers forced a fumble and collected 25 tackles in starting one of the 13 games in which he played last year. Downs made his first career start in last year's season opener.

Johnson may well have been the prize catch of a highly regarded recruiting class. A *Parade* All-American, Johnson was named Louisiana Gatorade Player of the Year after his senior season at O.P. Walker in New Orleans.

Sophomore ends Barkevious Mingo and Sam Montgomery were each All-Freshman selections by SEC coaches. Montgomery made the team after a knee injury cut short his season after five starts. Mingo's 35 tackles included 5.5 tackles for loss.

LSU favors smaller but quicker ends as in 6-5, 255-pound senior Kendrick Adams and 6-5, 265-pound junior Lavar Edwards. Adams and Edwards recorded 27 and 21 tackles, respectively, with Edwards capably filling in for Montgomery.

"I think those guys are going to be good players," Miles said. "We're going to let competition rule. I think we're going to have speed and depth."

Without Kelvin Sheppard, last year's leading tackler, the linebackers still pack plenty of firepower. Junior Ryan Baker finished second to Sheppard with 87 tackles, and senior Stefoin Francois started all 13 games and tallied 37 stops.

Senior Karnell Hatcher, who built a reputation as run stopper at strong safety, has moved to outside linebacker.

SPECIAL TEAMS

This unit has undergone the greatest change with a new coach, punter, place-kicker and return man.

Former New York Giants assistant special teams coordinator Thomas McGaughey has replaced Joe Robinson, who became North Carolina's defensive line coach.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Jordan Jefferson

He certainly didn't have an MVP-type season in 2010, but redeemed himself with three passing touchdowns and one rushing score in the Cotton Bowl. He needs to be the catalyst in what could be a special season. ... A three-year starter, he has the experience to make good use of his mobility and strong arm. ... Career totals: 336 of 578 for 3,996 yards, with 28 touchdowns and 18 interceptions.

EMERGING STAR

RB Spencer Ware

Capped his freshman season with an eye-opening Cotton Bowl performance that has raised expectations. Rushed 10 times for 102 yards in a 41-24 victory over Texas A&M. ... A skillful athlete, he played outfield on the baseball team, having rejoined it two days after rushing for two touchdowns in the spring football game. ... Averaged 5.2 yards per carry during the regular season when he carried 14 times for 73 yards and a touchdown. He also caught eight passes for 84 yards.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Zach Mettenberger

If Jordan Jefferson is the MVP, Mettenberger doesn't figure to see much playing time. Still, he remains the most visible new face on the team after having transferred from Butler (Kan.) Community College. ... In his only season at Butler, he threw for 2,678 yards and 22 touchdowns with four interceptions in guiding his team to a spot in the junior college national championship game. ... Originally signed with Georgia but was dismissed after one year for off-the-field problems.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.9	30
Rushing	166.8	43
Passing	201.3	71
Total	368.1	55
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.2	56
Rushing	110.2	17
Passing	215.4	73
Total	325.5	32
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.08	67

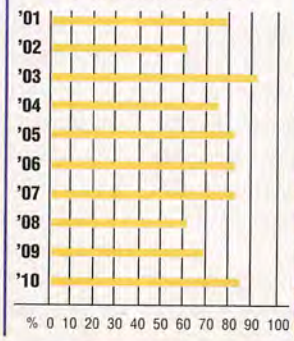
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	24.9	76
Rushing	122.8	90
Passing	181.8	97
Total	304.5	112
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	16.2	11
Rushing	133.4	46
Passing	194.2	29
Total	327.6	26
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	36

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.7	45
Rushing	185.7	28
Passing	155.6	107
Total	341.3	86
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.2	11
Rushing	137.3	42
Passing	169.9	10
Total	307.2	12
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 8	+ 0.62	22

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

11-2, 6-2

W	vs. North Carolina	30-24
W	at Vanderbilt	27-3
W	MISSISSIPPI STATE	29-7
W	WEST VIRGINIA	20-14
W	TENNESSEE	16-14
W	at Florida	33-29
W	McNEESE STATE	32-10
L	at Auburn	17-24
W	ALABAMA	24-21
W	LOUISIANA-MONROE	51-0
W	OLE MISS	43-36
L	at Arkansas	23-31
	Cotton Bowl	
W	vs. Texas A&M	41-24

PLAYER PROFILE

Jordan Jefferson
Photo by RD Moore

After Cotton Bowl, Still Lots to Prove

Asked to assess his performance in last January's Cotton Bowl, LSU quarterback Jordan Jefferson said he wanted to show the critics "what I need to do on the field to be noticed as a good quarterback."

For the time being, anyway, Jefferson silenced his doubters with three touchdown passes and one rushing score in the Tigers' 41-24 victory over Texas A&M. But that was then. This is a new season, and Jefferson still hasn't convinced everyone he is the player for the job.

Coach Les Miles had to reaffirm after spring practice that Jefferson remains the starting quarterback after having held the position for the past two years.

Jefferson struggled mightily last season and failed to throw for 100 yards in a game seven times, including four in a row. Before his outstanding Cotton Bowl achievement, Jefferson had tossed only four regular-season touchdown passes with nine interceptions. He finished having completed 118 of 209 passes for 1,411 yards with 10 interceptions.

He often shared time with senior backup Jarrett Lee and now must be concerned with the presence of sophomore junior college transfer Zach Mettenberger.

For all that, LSU still finished 11-2 and closed with a resounding postseason victory. The job remains Jefferson's to keep or lose, and as such, he can control the direction of the team. That's particularly true given that the Tigers can't rely so much on their game-saving defense and special teams that lost several key components from last season.

The 6-5, 224-pound Jefferson realizes what's at stake. That's one reason he said he worked so hard in the spring.

"I told myself that I needed to practice 110 percent every practice in order for me to become better," Jefferson said. "That's what I had to do."

LSU rewarded Jefferson in the spring with the Jimmy Taylor Award for outstanding leadership, effort and performance. It now rests with Jefferson to carry that production into a regular season that begins with national runner-up Oregon and includes BCS champion Auburn.

"He continues to get better," Miles said. "He is making much better decisions. He has clearly improved. He can describe what he sees, how he sees the play and his description."

Miles complimented new offensive coordinator Steve Kragthorpe for having "done a great job" with Jefferson. Kragthorpe, in turn, lauded Jefferson for having "a lot of ability."

It's time to show it all the time.

"Thomas is a great addition to the staff," Miles said. "He has a tremendous understanding of the game."

Gone, too, are Patrick Peterson, who led the SEC in punt and kickoff return average, Josh Jasper, who kicked a school record 28 field goals to lead the league, and Derek Helton, who finished second in the SEC in punting average.

It may take a combination of Ron Brooks, Tyrann Mathieu and Rueben Randle to handle the return duties. Junior walk-on Drew Alleman appears to be the next place-kicker, while freshman Brad Wing from Australia or senior D.J. Howard will take over as the punter.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The season-opener against national champion runner-up Oregon in Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, could set the tone for what is to come. September also brings a tough non-conference game at Big East favorite West Virginia.

LSU also will play the defending national champion when it entertains SEC West Division foe Auburn in their annual showdown Oct. 22. Auburn scored late to hand LSU one of its two losses last season, 24-17.

There is hardly a breather in the SEC West, but the game at Alabama on Nov. 5 looms especially large. Former LSU defensive coordinator Will Muschamp will return to Tiger Stadium as Florida's new head coach on Oct. 8.

— David Moormann

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	vs. Oregon (Arlington)	12-1
Sept. 10	NORTHWESTERN STATE	5-6
Sept. 15	at Mississippi State	9-4
Sept. 24	at West Virginia	9-4
Oct. 1	KENTUCKY	6-7
Oct. 8	FLORIDA	8-5
Oct. 15	at Tennessee	6-7
Oct. 22	AUBURN	14-0
Nov. 5	at Alabama	10-3
Nov. 12	WESTERN KENTUCKY	2-10
Nov. 19	at Ole Miss	4-8
Nov. 25	ARKANSAS	10-3

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OLE MISS REBELS

For more coverage of the Rebels, visit olemiss.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: David Lee **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tyrone Nix** **STADIUM: Vaught-Hemingway Stadium: 60,580**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
4-8, 1-7 SEC (6th, West)

COACH:
Houston Nutt — At Ole Miss: 22-16, 3 years; overall: 133-86, 18 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
16; 9 offense, 5 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Brandon Bolden, QB Randall Mackey, LT Bradley Sowell, RB Jeff Scott, FS Damien Jackson, DE Kentrell Lockett

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
With the workhorse Bolden, speedy Scott and a relatively deep offensive line, the Rebels shouldn't have a problem establishing a run game. Mackey gives hope that he could be a dynamic quarterback. Lockett should provide pressure off the edge, and the special teams are particularly solid.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Beyond Lockett, the defensive line is relatively unproven. The secondary has depth problems and wasn't particularly solid last season, either. Ole Miss doesn't seem to have many playmaking wide receivers, meaning the passing game may suffer.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Jeremiah Masoli, DT Jerrell Powe, LB Jonathan Cornell, WR Markeith Summers, WR Jesse Grandy

OVERVIEW:
Ole Miss has some of the pieces of the puzzle to foreshadow an impressive offense. But the defense is the big question mark, given how it played last year and the lack of star personnel returning. The schedule does the Rebels no favor, either — they open up with BYU, travel to Fresno State and replace Tennessee with Georgia in the East Division rotation.

Rebel Rebuild Must be Done on the Fly

When Houston Nutt earned 18 wins and a pair of January bowl victories in his first two seasons as Ole Miss coach, he had the run of Oxford. The Rebels hadn't seen a two-year run of success like that since John Vaught was coaching in the 1950s and 1960s.

A 4-8 season in 2010 changed things.

Much of that early momentum was lost in the wake of last year's rollercoaster of a season that started with a humbling loss to lower-division Jacksonville State. Now, Nutt is forced to rebuild in year four of his tenure with the Rebels.

It's not a reclamation project by any means. But there are enough holes to go along with the bright spots to make a case that the project is sizable. And in the Southeastern Conference, particularly the West Division, any slip makes the climb back all the more daunting.

For Nutt, finding solutions is all about going back to the basics. Accountability and discipline were discarded at times in 2010, but Nutt re-focused his team with a more strenuous offseason program, one he said was the most difficult of his time in Oxford.

"We wanted an investment," he said. "We wanted a sacrifice. We wanted to get tougher. We wanted to get stronger. For the most part we did."

The cornerstones of the offseason program were a buddy system for accountability and a competition-fueled strength program.

But is it enough to correct the Xs and Os?

Ole Miss' defense gave up more points last year than any team in school history, and it gave up the most points by any SEC defense in seven seasons. Six of that unit's starters aren't returning; junior linebacker D.T. Shackelford, its leader, is likely out for the year after suffering a knee ligament injury during spring drills.

Even though the offense looked statistically healthy last year, Nutt decided to make a change. He brought in David Lee, most recently the quarterbacks coach with the NFL's Miami Dolphins, as the offensive coordinator. Lee left the running game mostly the same but overhauled the passing concepts with help from new passing game coordinator/receivers coach Gunter Brewer.

As with everything in Mississippi, though, the feisty rivalry with Mississippi State provides some of the greatest context. Ole Miss has lost two straight to the Bulldogs, and coach Dan Mullen is quick to remind the Rebels of just that. Three straight would have Rebel fans — and especially Nutt — steaming.

OFFENSE

Quarterback questions dominated spring practice, and for good reason. Four quarterbacks, seemingly on an even plane, entered the spring vying for the starting spot. By spring's end, only three remained — Nathan Stanley quit the team — and dynamic junior Randall Mackey had the edge.

Mackey is billed as a dual-threat quarterback, which is accurate, but doesn't clearly represent his true value. Mackey can loft a perfect deep ball just like any other of the "true pocket passers." He had to work past a speech problem that caused difficulty calling plays in the huddle, but all indications are he's mastered it.

Though Nutt said post-spring that Mackey had edged ahead, don't discount further competition — or the possibility of a two-quarterback system.

Zack Stoudt, a junior college transfer who originally signed with Louisville, is more in the pro-style mold. And after

Brandon Bolden
Photo by RD Moore

the NCAA waived the year-in-residence requirement for Barry Brunetti, the West Virginia transfer could make noise, too.

"I feel real good about these three that we have," Nutt said. "Probably the best three that we've had at one time on campus."

The Rebels can be even more optimistic about the prospects of their running game. Brandon Bolden flirted with the NFL draft last winter but decided to remain in Oxford. That means the Rebels return a back who emerged as a workhorse last year. Bolden should be a cinch for a 1,000-yard season if for no other reason than that he'll get a ton of carries.

There's probably not a faster Rebel than Jeff Scott, who technically will be Bolden's backup but is more of a different caliber weapon for Nutt and coordinator David Lee. Scott presents a change-of-pace, speed guy who thrives in different formations and when running off the edge. If that's not enough, Enrique Davis and Devin Thomas provide true depth at a position that may be the Rebels' strength.

It helps that Ole Miss returns an experienced offensive line with four starters. It's a line fortified on the edge — Bradley Sowell at left tackle and Bobby Massie at right tackle are the top bigs.

Questions abound about who Mackey or the other quarterbacks will pass to. The receiving corps has potential, but no real playmaker in the mold of former Reb Shay Hodge. Melvin Harris, at 6-6, looks the part, but Ja-Mes Logan may have been the most consistent player in the spring. Ferbia Allen leads a perilously thin group of tight ends.

DEFENSE

Gone are some of the high-profile defensive linemen who were the cornerstone of the Rebels' nine-win seasons in 2008 and 2009. Ole Miss will have to cobble together a solid rotation on the interior of the defensive front.

Bryon Bennett and Carlton Martin, two redshirt freshmen, may be the building blocks, but they're smaller players than what Ole Miss has grown accustomed.

In a spring practice filled, at times, with bad injury news, Ole Miss got some good news halfway through when the NCAA ruled favorably on defensive end Kentrell Lockett's petition for a sixth year of eligibility. Lockett brings the fun personality and strong locker room presence the team appeared to lack last year.

Pair him with Wayne Dorsey, and the Rebels have a pair of tall, rangy defensive ends who could offer some return to the heavy pass-rush days of the past. Dorsey, though, had a disappointing 2010 in his first year out of junior col-

D.T. Shackelford
Photo by Kevin C. Cox/Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Randall Mackey	Jr.	Dangerous on the run, but nice deep accuracy.	Zack Stoudt, Jr. / B. Brunetti, So.
RB	Brandon Bolden*	Sr.	Should be 1,000-yard rusher Rebs need.	Enrique Davis, Sr.
RB	Jeff Scott*	So.	Speedy option in the Dexter McCluster mold.	Devin Thomas, Jr.
WR	Ja-Mes Logan	So.	Most consistent playmaker in spring.	Vincent Sanders, Fr.
WR	Melvin Harris*	Jr.	Height (6-6) should create matchup problems.	Terrell Grant, So.
TE	Ferbia Allen*	Jr.	Emerging as a team leader.	Alex Williams, So.
LT	Bradley Sowell*	Sr.	Has come a long way in his time in Oxford.	Emmanuel McCray, So.
LG	Alex Washington*	Sr.	At 356 pounds, some serious beef at guard.	Patrick Junen, So.
C	A.J. Hawkins*	Jr.	Close position battle should carry into August.	Evan Swindall, So.
RG	Jared Duke*	So.	Earned seasoning as a freshman last year.	Logan Clair, Sr.
RT	Bobby Massie*	Jr.	Heralded recruit anchoring end of line.	Matt Hall, Jr.
K	Bryson Rose*	Jr.	Consistent kicker for Nutt past two years.	Andrew Ritter, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Kentrell Lockett*	Sr.	Returning after ACL tear last year.	Gerald Rivers, Jr.*
DT	Bryon Bennett	Fr.	Emerged near the top of rotation in spring.	Justin Smith, Sr.
DT	Carlton Martin	Fr.	HS teammate of Bennett in Madison, Miss.	Corey Gaines, So.
DE	Wayne Dorsey	Sr.	Looking to rebound from disappointing '10.	Jason Jones, Jr.
LB	Mike Marry	So.	Filling void left by now-injured D.T. Shackelford.	Rudy Wilson, Jr.
LB	Clarence Jackson	So.	Missed 2010.	Ralph Williams, Fr.
LB	Joel Kight*	Jr.	Underwent minor knee surgery in spring.	Will Martin, So.
CB	Marcus Temple*	Sr.	Missed spring after sports hernia surgery.	Wesley Pendleton, Jr.
CB	Charles Sawyer	So.	Coaches felt he made big strides in spring.	Frank Crawford, So.
SS	Brishen Matthews	So.	Earned seasoning as true freshman last year.	Ivan Nicholas, Jr.
FS	Damien Jackson*	Sr.	JC transfer was a heavy hitter in '10.	Sam Noblin, Fr.
P	Tyler Campbell*	Jr.	Has a career average of 45.4 yards.	Andrew Ritter, Jr.

*Returning Starter

REBELS RECRUITING 2011 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Nickolas Brassell
Considered one of the top 100 recruits nationally and top-10 receivers in his class, Brassell turned down scholarship offers from programs such as Alabama, Auburn, Notre Dame and Tennessee to play for the Rebels. Brassell has big-play ability, but if needed he potentially could be used at cornerback.

C.J. Johnson
Landing Johnson was big for two reasons.
1. The five-star inside linebacker, who is 6-3, 235, once was committed to archrival Mississippi State before flipping.
2. He is an immensely talented prospect who should have an excellent shot at earning a spot with the first team in 2011.

Donte Moncrief
Moncrief wasn't as highly regarded as Brassell, but he, too, is considered to be an elite receiving prospect. And like with Brassell, early playing time is possible. Moncrief is a legitimate burner. But he also has great size. That combination will make him a difficult matchup for opposing cornerbacks and linebackers.

THE SLEEPER

Senquez Golson
Only a three-star prospect, Golson might be among the most underrated signees in the SEC. An athletic cornerback with very good speed (he covers a ton of ground) and a solid build, Golson could make an impact this season largely because of his excellent coverage and ball-hawking abilities.

Committments	27
Average Stars	3.26
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	5
★★★☆☆	21
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	88
National Rank: 19	SEC: 8

2012 NEEDS: The three spots that stick out for the Rebels are running back, defensive back and defensive tackle. The most pressing need probably is in the backfield, where Ole Miss hopes to land two, or possibly even three, running backs in this cycle. That's an area at which a freshman or two could be counted on to play in 2012. In the secondary, the Rebels very well could take as many as four cornerbacks, and maybe more. At defensive tackle, Ole Miss isn't hurting, only looking for depth.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Justin Bell	OL	6-3	320	★★★	Jackson, MS	Callaway
Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 39 offensive guard...Chose Ole Miss over Mississippi State, Southern Miss and Memphis.						
Nickolas Brassell	WR	6-0	175	★★★★	Batesville, MS	South Panola
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 7 wide receiver... Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Chelarvez Brown	DB	6-2	188	★★★	Winona, MS	Winona
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 46 safety...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Serderius Bryant	LB	5-10	202	★★★	Sanford, FL	Seminole
Recorded 151 tackles, four interceptions and two sacks as a senior...Helped lead team to Class 6A state semifinals in 2010.						
Aaron Garbutt	DB	6-3	215	★★★	Fullerton, CA	Fullerton C.C.
Recorded 49 tackles and one interception in 2010 and had 49 tackles and four interceptions in 2009...Chose Ole Miss over New Mexico State and SMU.						
Senquez Golson	DB	6-0	180	★★★	Pascagoula, MS	Pascagoula
Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 33 cornerback...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Uriah Grant	DT	6-1	280	★★★	Fullerton, CA	Fullerton C.C.
Rated as the No. 50 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Recorded 42 tackles, 17 tackles for loss and six sacks in 2010.						
Mitch Hall	OL	6-6	330	★★★	Russellville, AR	Russellville
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Arkansas by Rivals.com...Chose Ole Miss over Missouri.						
Woodrow Hamilton	DT	6-3	265	★★★	Raleigh, MS	Raleigh
Rated as the No. 23 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Recorded 65 tackles, 12 tackles for loss and six sacks as a senior...Chose Ole Miss over Mississippi State.						
Ethan Hutson	OL	6-4	295	★★★	Destrehan, LA	Destrehan
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 8 offensive center...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
C.J. Johnson	LB	6-3	235	★★★★★	Philadelphia, MS	Philadelphia
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 2 inside linebacker... Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Keith Lewis	LB	6-2	216	★★★	Tampa, FL	Freedom
Rated as the nation's No. 57 outside linebacker by Rivals.com...Recorded 102 tackles as a senior.						
Marcus Mayers	LB	6-2	195	★★★	Taylorsville, MS	Taylorsville
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 25 outside linebacker...Recorded 54 tackles, 12 tackles for loss, 3.5 sacks and two interceptions as a senior.						
Maikhail Miller	QB	6-3	235	★★★	Fulton, MS	Itawamba Agricultural
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 23 pro-style quarterback...Participated in the NUC All-World Bowl.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Donte Moncrief	WR	6-2	203	★★★★	Raleigh, MS	Raleigh
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 17 wide receiver...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Collins Moore	WR	6-2	185	★★★	Madison, AL	Bob Jones
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 56 wide receiver...Recorded 46 catches for 808 yards and 10 TDs as a senior.						
Philander Moore	ATH	5-10	180	★★★	Brenham, TX	Blinn C.C.
Earned first-team NJCAA All-American honors as a kick returner in 2010...Enrolled at Ole Miss in January.						
Aaron Morris	OL	6-5	310	★★★★	Jackson, MS	Callaway
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 13 offensive tackle...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Jamal Mosley	TE	6-4	250	★★★	Senatobia, MS	Northwest Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the No. 39 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Had 42 catches for 350 yards and four touchdowns in 2010.						
Ivan Nicholas	DB	5-11	195	★★★	Brooklyn, NY	ASA College
Recorded 50 tackles, 13.5 tackles for loss and two sacks in 2010...Originally signed with South Florida out of high school.						
Gilbert Pena	DT	6-4	315	★★★	Brooklyn, NY	ASA College
Rated as the No. 28 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Chose Ole Miss over Florida State and Kansas State.						
Wesley Pendleton	DB	5-11	180	★★★	Wesson, MS	Copiah-Lincoln C.C.
Rated as the No. 42 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Had 28 tackles, three interceptions and 11 pass breakups in 2010.						
Cody Prewitt	ATH	6-3	200	★★★★	Bay Springs, MS	Sylva Bay Academy
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 athlete...Recorded 121 tackles and eight interceptions on defense while rushing for 2,406 yards and 41 touchdowns on offense as a senior.						
Tobias Singleton	WR	6-2	187	★★★★	Madison, MS	Madison Central
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 20 wide receiver...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Zack Stoudt	QB	6-5	225	★★★	Council Bluffs, IA	Iowa Western C.C.
Rated as the No. 43 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Chose Ole Miss over Kansas and Wyoming.						
Kameron Wood	DE	6-4	220	★★★	Birmingham, AL	John Carroll
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 weakside defensive end...Recorded 80 tackles, 10 sacks and three interceptions as a senior.						
T.J. Worthy	WR	6-2	180	★★★	Gadsden City, AL	Gadsden City
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Selected to compete in the NUC All-World Bowl...Chose Ole Miss over Memphis and Southern Miss.						

REBELS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
83	Ferbia Allen	TE	6-3	235	Jr.	Pine Bluff, AR
29	Abdul Bangura	CB	5-10	180	Fr.	Greenbelt, MD
95	Bryon Bennett	DT	6-2	280	Fr.	Madison
48	Justin Bigham	FB	6-1	234	So.	Southhaven
34	Brandon Bolden	RB	5-11	221	Sr.	Baton Rouge, LA
62	Michael Brown	OG	6-5	305	So.	Lexington, TX
57	Terrell Brown	OT	6-10	376	Jr.	Drew
11	Barry Brunetti	QB	6-0	213	So.	Memphis, TN
41	Bill Busch	FB	5-11	232	So.	St. Louis, MO
97	Tyler Campbell	P	6-2	227	Jr.	Little Rock, AR
71	Logan Clair	OL	6-5	327	Sr..	Mustang, OK
33	Cliff Coleman	CB	5-10	188	Fr.	Lauderal Lakes, FL
51	Ryan Collins	LB	6-1	215	So.	Frisco, TX
94	Chris Conley	P	5-8	181	So.	Bradenton, FL
5	Frank Crawford	CB	6-0	185	So.	Miami, FL
27	Enrique Davis	RB	5-11	226	Sr..	Lynn Haven, FL
59	Will Denny	LS	5-10	248	Fr.	Jackson
25	Eric Dietz	RB	5-8	190	Fr.	Humboldt, TN
7	Wayne Dorsey	DE	6-6	262	Sr..	Baltimore, MD
74	Jared Duke	OG	6-7	346	So.	Cleveland, TN
82	Dylan Dyer	TE	6-4	247	Fr.	Flora
56	Nick Eley	LB	5-11	260	So.	Olive Branch
33	E.J. Epperson	FB	6-2	253	Jr.	Humbolt, TN
58	Corey Gaines	DT	6-1	302	So.	Tallahassee, FL
67	Chris Gill	OL	6-4	307	So.	Appleton, WI
46	Tyriek Gracia	LB	6-1	204	Fr.	Hialeah, FL
81	Terrell Grant	WR	6-2	213	So.	Cleveland
45	H.R. Greer	FB	5-11	235	Jr.	Olive Branch
75	Matt Hall	OT	6-9	340	Jr.	Russellville, AR
46	David Hankins	K	6-2	232	Sr.	Shreveport, LA
35	Earnest Harmon	FB	5-9	217	Fr.	Macon
5	Melvin Harris	WR	6-6	210	Jr.	Buford, GA
76	A.J. Hawkins	C	6-3	313	Jr.	Lithonia, GA
26	Derrick Herman	WR	5-10	201	Sr.	Cleveland
64	Jacob Hickman	LS	5-10	248	So.	Carriere
83	Jordan Holder	WR	5-10	171	So.	Bay Springs
22	Kyle Horine	CB	5-9	184	Jr.	Kingwood, TX
65	Chase Hughes	C	6-2	297	Fr.	Springville, AL
19	Evan Ingram	QB	6-1	228	Fr.	Gray, LA
10	Clarence Jackson	LB	6-1	235	So.	Atlanta, GA
1	Damien Jackson	S	6-2	210	Sr.	Pineville, LA
94	Delvin Jones	DE	6-4	240	So.	Miami, FL
53	Jason Jones	DE	6-2	252	Jr.	Albany, GA
85	Layton Jones	TE	6-4	260	Sr.	Greenville
77	Patrick Junen	OG	6-6	311	So.	Huntsville, AL
49	Brandon Keel	FB	6-1	235	Fr.	Gulfport
23	Houston Keyes	RB	5-7	158	Fr.	Ridgeland
15	Joel Kight	LB	5-9	226	Jr.	Lithonia, GA
45	Josh Lancaster	LB	5-8	222	Jr.	Mobile, AL
40	Kentrell Lockett	DE	6-5	248	Sr.	Hahnville, LA
85	Ja-Mes Logan	WR	6-2	190	So.	Houston, TX

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
1	Randall Mackey	QB	5-11	195	Jr.	Bastrop, LA
52	Mike Marry	LB	6-2	248	So.	Clearwater, FL
92	Carlton Martin	DT	6-1	288	Fr.	Madison
49	Will Martin	LB	6-0	217	So.	Madison
89	Z. Mason	TE	6-5	267	So.	Nashville, TN
79	Bobby Massie	OT	6-6	325	Jr.	Lynchburg, VA
13	Brishen Mathews	S	5-11	200	So.	Monticello, AR
70	Emmanuel McCray	OT	6-4	319	So.	Jackson
2	Philander Moore	WR	5-9	192	So.	Austin, TX
20	Brian Morris	WR	6-1	198	Jr.	Tulsa, OK
82	Vincent Moss	LB	5-11	195	Sr.	Munford, AL
28	Korvic Neat	WR	5-8	165	So.	Hallandale, FL
21	Ivan Nicholas	S	5-10	204	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
27	Sam Noblin	S	6-2	217	Fr.	Ocean Springs
84	Jack Nuismer	TE	6-2	234	So.	Nashville, TN
4	Nicholas Parker	RB	5-11	243	Fr.	Batesville
36	John Peloza	TE	6-4	256	Fr.	Plano, TX
99	Gilbert Pena	DT	6-2	336	Jr.	Yonkers, NY
6	Wesley Pendleton	CB	5-11	180	Jr.	Natchez
66	Chad Phillips	LS	6-2	236	So.	Madison
13	Robert Ratliff	QB	6-0	215	So.	Fort Worth, TX
96	Andrew Ritter	K/P	6-3	214	Jr.	Jackson
90	Gerald Rivers	DE	6-5	245	Jr.	Ellenwood, GA
81	Bryson Rose	K	5-11	197	Jr.	Raleigh, NC
80	Nick Sabert	WR	5-11	175	Fr.	Lebanon, OH
10	Vincent Sanders	WR	6-1	190	Fr.	Macon
3	Charles Sawyer	CB	5-11	174	So.	Miami, FL
3	Jeff Scott	RB	5-7	175	So.	Miami, FL
42	D.T. Shackelford	LB	6-1	244	Jr.	Decatur, AL
39	Joshua Shipp	S	6-0	190	Jr.	Batesville
93	Dillon Short	K	5-11	196	Fr.	Austin, TX
47	Tim Simon	RB	6-0	228	So.	Cordova, AL
93	Justin Smith	DT	6-3	298	Sr.	Alpharetta, GA
78	Bradley Sowell	OT	6-7	315	Sr.	Hernando
12	Nathan Stanley	QB	6-4	220	Jr.	Tahlequah, OK
8	Zack Stoudt	QB	6-4	222	Jr.	Dublin, OH
54	Walker Sturgeon	DE	6-1	251	Fr.	Horn Lake
56	Evan Swindall	C	6-2	306	So.	LaFayette, GA
37	Matt Tarpley	WR	5-9	170	So.	Minneapolis, MN
60	Josh Tatum	OL	6-5	328	Jr.	Marbury, AL
4	Marcus Temple	CB	5-10	196	Sr.	Manquin, VA
29	Devin Thomas	RB	5-9	201	Jr.	San Antonio, TX
54	Carlos Thompson	DE	6-4	240	So.	Hollandale
86	Ben Walker	WR	6-3	205	Fr.	Ellenwood, GA
98	Taurus Ward	DT	6-2	320	Jr.	Aberdeen
73	Alex Washington	OG	6-4	356	Sr.	Monroe, LA
30	D'Lyle Washington	RB	5-7	178	Fr.	Carrollton, TX
55	Cameron Whigham	DE	6-2	256	So.	Snellville, GA
87	Alex Williams	TE	6-4	233	So.	Tallahassee, FL
17	Jarius Williams	S	5-11	194	Jr.	Parrish, AL
44	Ralph Williams	LB	6-0	235	Fr.	Miami, FL
31	Rudy Wilson	LB	5-11	216	Jr.	Port Orange, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Masoli	12	121.11	167	296	13	56.4	2039	14	70	169.9
N. Stanley	4	146.32	17	32	1	53.1	261	3	45	65.2

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Bolden	12	32	344	10.8	3	45	28.7
M Harris	11	30	408	13.6	3	41	37.1
J. Logan	12	29	387	13.3	2	51	32.2

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Bolden	12	163	1028	52	976	6.0	14	71	81.3
J. Masoli	12	121	635	91	544	4.5	6	56	45.3
J. Scott	10	66	476	47	429	6.5	3	83	42.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Cornell 80, D. Jackson 68, J. Brown 66
Tackles for loss: J. Cornell 14, D. Shackelford 9, J. Powe 8.5
Sacks: D. Shackelford 5, J. Cornell 4.5, A. Walker 4
Interceptions: F. Ingram 2, C. Sawyer 2, two tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Ole Miss coach **Houston Nutt** made three changes on his coaching staff this offseason, hiring **David Lee** as offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach, **Keith Burns** as secondary coach and **Gunter Brewer** as passing game coordinator/wide receivers coach.

Brewer's addition was a homecoming. His father, **Billy Brewer**, coached the Rebels between 1983 and 1994 and still lives in Oxford.

• Strength and conditioning coach **Don Decker**, who has worked with Nutt since his first season at Arkansas in 1998, was named the National Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Year for 2010 by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society.

• Junior linebacker **D.T. Shackelford** suffered a tear of his anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during an April 11 practice, and the school estimated his recovery time at six to eight months. The math on that is easy: He shouldn't be available for the 2011 season. And that's OK, because he has a redshirt season available after playing as a true freshman in 2009.

But don't tell that to Shackelford. He's not ruling out a recovery that will have him back on the field with his teammates this fall.

• When quarterback **Nathan Stanley**'s departure from the Ole Miss program was announced toward the end of spring practice, it marked the 10th member of the program to depart since season's end. Other than Stanley, very few had made significant contributions besides wide receiver/kick returner **Jesse Grandy**.

• For defensive coordinator **Tyrone Nix**, who has taken his share of heat from Ole Miss fans this offseason, there is good news: It can't get much worse. The bad news: The Rebels have a long way to go to realize the defensive success they had in 2008 and 2009.

Ole Miss gave up 35.2 points per game in 2010, easily the worst such number in the Southeastern Conference — and the worst in the league since 2003. The 422 points Ole Miss allowed was worst in school history.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Houston Nutt:** "Houston Nutt is a River Boat gambler, I think it's caught up with him. His first two years he had a lot of Ed (Orgeron's) players. Ed did a good job recruiting. People can say what they want about Ed, but the SOB could recruit. ... I think he (Nutt) is like a showboat, rah, rah, rah guy and not a lot of substance. He's a likeable guy and at the end of the day, he did a good job at Arkansas but I don't know how you can sustain (winning at Ole Miss)."

• **On QB play:** "If they can find their quarterback and get consistent play out of him, I'd expect them to bounce back and have a pretty decent year. They don't have the most talent in the league but they have enough to win more than they won last year."

Jeff Scott
Photo by RD Moore

lege and his job appears open should anybody be good enough to win it.

The Rebels appeared to be strong at linebacker until the fiery D.T. Shackelford went down during a position drill in the last week of spring practice. He tore knee ligaments and is highly doubtful to play this fall, but an accelerated rehab schedule could change that.

Mike Marry, a sophomore who played quite a bit last season, is likely to shift to Shackelford's outside spot. That opens the door for Clarence Jackson — who missed last fall due to disciplinary action — to take over at middle linebacker. Joel Kight, a junior at the other outside spot, is solid.

But it's clear that Ole Miss is counting on C.J. Johnson, its top recruit in the 2011 class, to play immediately and maybe even start at the critical position.

The secondary is the biggest area of defensive concern. It was part of a group that was dangerously vulnerable in the air last season, and it's hard to see how that will get better.

A pair of junior college transfers — Wesley Pendleton and Ivan Nicholas — added favorably to the unit in the spring, so there's hope. Nutt called Pendleton the "surprise of spring," with speed being a big reason for that praise. But even here, Ole Miss will want some of its signees to come in and play immediately.

In the meantime, right corner Charles Sawyer impressed coaches with his development during the spring, and Ole Miss thinks he's due for a big freshman-to-sophomore performance jump. Marcus Temple, a senior, brings experience at the other corner spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Spring practice brought a load of storylines at Ole Miss, but none of them involved the special teams, which toiled in anonymity. That's a good thing for the Rebels, who return both of their successful specialists from last season.

Junior Tyler Campbell is the reigning NCAA punting champion. At 46.37

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Brandon Bolden

Coaches know what he brings, so when he tweaked an ankle midway through spring, he wasn't asked to do anything more. ... Bolden emerged last year as a feature back when position mate Enrique Davis missed time with injury. ... Enters his final year at Ole Miss second in school history in TDs (28) and rushing TDs (23). ... Seventh in UM history in rushing yards (2,132). ... As a junior, he scored 17 touchdowns and led the team in rushing (976 yards) and receptions (32).

EMERGING STAR

CB Charles Sawyer

In an area in which the Rebels are perhaps most thin, Sawyer will be counted on to make a huge jump between freshman and sophomore seasons. ... Under tutelage of new secondary coach Keith Burns, seems to have made jumps in spring. ... Had 49 tackles and a tied-for-team high two interceptions as a redshirt freshman in 2010. ... Started four games and became a mainstay in the secondary. ... Was rated No. 38 among nation's cornerbacks by ESPN in 2009.

TOP NEWCOMER

LB C.J. Johnson

Long committed to Mississippi State during his recruitment, the Philadelphia (Miss.) High grad switched to Ole Miss in the final weeks, providing the centerpiece for the Rebels' celebrated class. ... Johnson was a U.S. Army, *Parade*, *PrepStar* and *SuperPrep* All-American. ... When D.T. Shackelford suffered his knee injury in spring, coaches were quick to say Johnson can step in and play — and conceivably start. ... Had 149 tackles and two interceptions as a senior.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.1	28
Rushing	186.5	28
Passing	221.2	53
Total	407.6	29
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.0	20
Rushing	85.5	4
Passing	221.7	81
Total	307.2	19
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 2	- 0.15	72

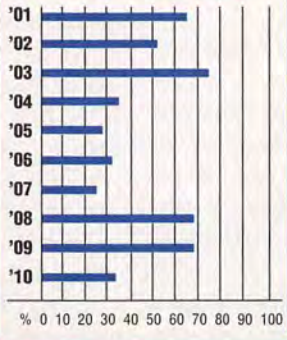
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.5	39
Rushing	183.6	32
Passing	218.8	57
Total	402.4	44
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.7	15
Rushing	140.3	58
Passing	174.4	15
Total	314.7	21
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 7	- 0.54	102

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.6	41
Rushing	207.6	18
Passing	192.3	82
Total	399.8	43
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	35.2	107
Rushing	152.8	61
Passing	246.3	103
Total	399.2	81
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 6	- 0.5	88

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
4-8, 1-7

L	JACKSONVILLE STATE (OT)	48-49
W	at Tulane	27-13
L	VANDERBILT	14-28
W	FRESNO STATE	55-38
W	KENTUCKY	42-35
L	at Alabama	10-23
L	at Arkansas	24-38
L	AUBURN	31-51
W	LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE	43-21
L	at Tennessee	14-52
L	at LSU	36-43
L	MISSISSIPPI STATE	23-31

PLAYER PROFILE

Randall Mackey
Photo by Robert Jordan/Ole Miss Photo

Mackey has the Tools To Lead the Rebels

In the fanfare that accompanied the controversial arrival of Oregon transfer Jeremiah Masoli last fall, there was a forgotten man: Randall Mackey, who had just arrived on campus after transferring from East Mississippi Community College.

By the end of August, Ole Miss felt it had enough at quarterback and publicly committed to redshirting Mackey.

Some seven months later, by the time spring practice had ended, Mackey was potentially the most celebrated member of the entire team. He was certainly the one who gave Rebel fans the most optimism heading into the long, hot summer months.

Why? Well, take a look at the way he plays quarterback.

When a play breaks down, he has the escapability and quickness to remain dangerous. And when the play calls for a deep pass, Mackey, seemingly without real effort, throws a beautiful arc right on target. It's an enviable set of skills he carries with humility.

It was no surprise that by the time spring ended, Mackey had a lead, however slight, in the three-man race to be the Rebels' starting quarterback in 2011.

"Randall takes your breath away because he's so elusive," Ole Miss coach Houston Nutt said, "and he has a strong arm. Very accurate."

Ole Miss had to work on another, more basic skill set that a quarterback must have: communication.

Mackey came to Oxford with a problem that often kept him from clearly calling the play in the huddle, yelling the snap count or calling audibles. More than that, he wasn't used to operating under center. All of his previous offenses had put him in the shotgun and watched him dominate.

"I've really improved in that," Mackey said of playing under center.

By spring's end, though, Mackey and coaches said the communication was no longer an issue: a welcome proclamation to Ole Miss fans who were amazed at his skills.

Mackey has produced some eye-opening stats at his previous stops. At EMCC, he threw for 3,122 yards, best in the nation in his sophomore year, and 32 touchdowns, second-most in the country that season. He also ran for 579 yards and five touchdowns.

Celebrated at the prep level, too, Mackey won *Parade Magazine* All-American honors and was Louisiana's Mr. Football in 2007 after leading Bastrop (La.) to three straight state titles.

yards per punt last year, he edged out Oklahoma State's Quinn Sharp by 0.13 yards per kick. And as a freshman in 2009, he was 12th in the nation. Another junior, place kicker Bryson Rose, had a consistent sophomore season and offered no reason why he won't have the job this fall.

The problem here is at kick returner. Jesse Grandy left the program after last season, opening up those roles. Look for Jeff Scott or junior college transfer Philander Moore to take over; they are among the fastest guys on the team.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Ole Miss felt like it may have lessened the degree of difficulty of its schedule when it moved Boise State from this year's opener to the 2014 opening game and picked up BYU at home. But the Cougars won't be an easy out and will present a tough opener on Sept. 3.

The Rebels also have a road trip to Fresno State and non-conference home games against Louisiana Tech and Football Championship Subdivision team Southern Illinois. In the season following an opening-game loss to Jacksonville State, nothing can be taken for granted.

Ole Miss lost Tennessee off its East Division rotation but picked up Georgia. That game will be in Oxford. The Rebels have Alabama, Arkansas and LSU at home but have to go to Auburn — and arch-rival Mississippi State.

— Kyle Veazey

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	BYU	7-6
Sept. 10	SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	5-6
Sept. 17	at Vanderbilt	2-10
Sept. 24	GEORGIA	6-7
Oct. 1	at Fresno State	8-5
Oct. 15	ALABAMA	10-3
Oct. 22	ARKANSAS	10-3
Oct. 29	at Auburn	14-0
Nov. 5	at Kentucky	6-7
Nov. 12	LOUISIANA TECH	5-7
Nov. 19	LSU	11-2
Nov. 26	at Mississippi State	9-4

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MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS

For more coverage of the Bulldogs, visit mississippistate.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Les Koenning **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chris Wilson, Geoff Collins** **STADIUM: Davis-Wade Stadium: 55,082**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
9-4, 4-4 (5th, West)

COACH:
Dan Mullen — At Mississippi State and overall: 14-11, 2 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
16; 8 offense, 7 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Chris Relf, RB Vick Ballard, RB LaDarius Perkins, WR Chad Bumphis, LB Brandon Wilson, DT Fletcher Cox, S Nickoe Whitley DE Sean Ferguson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
All the key contributors to a rushing offense that ranked 16th nationally last season return, and the receivers are deeper and propped up by the leadership of Bumphis. At quarterback, Relf improved dramatically last season and continued to impress in the spring. The defense returns a veteran secondary and a strong interior defensive line.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
One defensive end spot appears troublesome, and replacing three starting linebackers could give the Bulldogs some early hiccups on defense. The offense was carried by its line last season, so losing its center and NFL-type left tackle is worrisome.

KEY LOSSES:
LB Chris White, LB K.J. Wright, DE Pernell McPhee, LT Derek Sherrod, C J.C. Brignone

OVERVIEW:
If the Bulldogs can find answers at linebacker and at left tackle, they could very well surpass the nine wins they reached last season. The schedule proves to be tough early, which could douse those hopes, but experience and a bevy of playmakers at the skill positions should provide more points for Mullen's dynamic offense.

Bulldogs Try to Make Jump from Good to Great

Not many people took Dan Mullen seriously last year when he stepped behind the podium at the Southeastern Conference's media days and talked about winning a championship.

After all, Mississippi State had not contended in the SEC West in more than a decade. And with powerhouses Alabama and LSU seemingly cemented as the top two teams in the division, such a leap for the often-labeled doormat of the conference appeared to be nearly impossible.

This year, though, fans might want to listen to what State's coach has to say. After posting a 9-4 record, the Bulldogs are hungry and experienced in 2011.

And Mullen isn't afraid to heighten expectations in Starkville.

"That's always going to be our goal — find a way to get ourselves to Atlanta," Mullen said.

And why not utter those words of "championship?" Although MSU hasn't been to the SEC championship game in Atlanta since 1998, these Bulldogs are on a roll comparable only to those Jackie Sherrill teams of the late 1990s.

The offense is inventive and unique to the SEC. The defense, even without Manny Diaz calling the plays, promises to be aggressive and blitz-happy again this season. In response, fans turned out in record-setting droves last season, prompting school officials to consider stadium expansion.

State did it all last season by beating some of the nation's biggest and best football powers, even though each were caught at the right time in perceived down years. The Bulldogs defeated Florida, Georgia and Michigan, finished the season with a top-15 ranking and set a handful of school records in the process.

The rushing offense ranked 16th nationally. Dual-threat quarterback Chris Relf, a two-star recruit out of high school, looked every bit the part of an SEC-caliber signal caller and threw for 200 yards or more in the final three games of the season.

But there will be several key differences with this MSU team. For one, the Bulldogs will not sneak up on opponents this season. Perhaps a larger challenge is meeting fans' expectations, which have never been higher. Mullen said he'd rather cast aside those expectations, because none will be higher than his own.

"When I go home at night and put my head on the pillow — I guess this will sound bad for our fans —but I'm not thinking about how I impressed our fans today," Mullen said. "I'm thinking: Did we do everything we could do to improve ourselves? ...

"Whether that fits everybody's win-loss expectation, I'll be able to sleep."

Mullen credited the jump to a nine-win season to the staff's development of players something he hopes did not take a step back this summer.

"You've got to take each one of those steps to improve," Mullen said. "If we are improved as a football team (this) year from where we were last year, that's a positive season. Now, our goal on the season is to find a way to win the West and get to Atlanta because that's what we can control."

OFFENSE

Mullen is rarely satisfied, but he would be with one set of numbers this season.

"Forty-two points a game," he said in the spring. "I'd be satisfied with that."

To get there, the Bulldogs will need more production from the passing game. MSU averaged 186.5 yards in that department and was buoyed by the nation's 16th-best rushing offense (214.8 yards)

Vick Ballard
Photo by Marvin Gentry-US PRESSWIRE

as it scored 29 points a game last season.

Mullen's ideal numbers include 240 yards passing and 220 yards rushing, with Chris Relf completing at least 62 percent of his passes. The coach said he'd be "really disappointed" if Relf finished near 58.3 percent — a school record, mind you — from last season.

"As you get more experienced and as you get more comfortable in the offense, you should be making quicker decisions," Mullen said, "and, usually, quicker decisions lead to a higher percentage."

Standing in Mullen's corner are eight returning starters, including Relf, who passed for 1,789 yards and ran for 713 last year. Explosive running back Vick Ballard also is back, along with receivers Chad Bumphis and Arceto Clark, who combined for 996 receiving yards after some early struggles against eventual national champion Auburn.

The hope is that the dropped passes from early last season are a relic of the past.

"It's still a work in progress, let's be very frank," said first-year receivers coach Angelo Mirando. "We still have a lot of work to do, but they're coming along."

State found its identity on offense about midway through last season, when it ditched a two-quarterback system and slowed the rotating door for runners, settling with Ballard and Relf.

Ballard set the school record for rushing touchdowns in a season (19) and rushed for 968 yards.

"Last year when I got here, I had to come in and learn the offense," said Ballard, a senior who transferred to MSU in 2010. "This year, it feels like I've been here forever."

Going down the checklist on offense, Mullen didn't hesitate much when discussing the Bulldogs' apparent strengths. Relf and the backup quarterbacks are "comfortable" and "familiar." The tailback position is thin, but "we have guys that have carried the ball and have had big games." And the receivers, once the youngest group on the field, will mostly be composed of juniors.

But that's where the hesitation creeps into Mullen's voice.

"I guess the thing that concerns you is the offensive line," Mullen said. " As soon as you take one guy out, there's not an experienced guy coming in. It's going to be a rookie coming on the field and that's the biggest concern. We have to stay healthy."

The biggest issue is at left tackle. Derek Sherrod, an All-SEC selection, is off to the pros. In his place are two inexperienced hopefuls. The oldest, senior James Carmon, moved from defensive tackle in December and struggled in spring drills. The other, freshman Blaine Clausell, is still trying to bulk up.

DEFENSE

The sign outside the MSU lineback-

Corey Broomfield
Photo by RD Moore

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Chris Relf*	Sr.	Confidence at all-time high; arm on target.	Tyler Russell, So.
RB	Vick Ballard*	Sr.	Bulldogs need another big season from Ballard.	LaDarius Perkins, So.
WR	Chad Bumphis*	Jr.	Big-play threat in the middle of field.	Brandon Heavens, Jr.
WR	Arceto Clark*	Jr.	Possession receiver with strong hands.	Michael Carr, So.
WR	Chris Smith*	Jr.	Came on late last season; good after catch.	Ricco Sanders, So.
TE	Marcus Green	Sr.	Mismatch for LBs; returning from knee injury.	Kendrick Cook, Sr.
LT	Blaine Clausell	Fr.	Big shoes to fill with Derek Sherrod departure.	James Carmon, Sr.
LG	Gabe Jackson*	So.	Steady hand who started 13 games last season.	Damien Robinson, Fr.
C	Quentin Saulsberry*	Sr.	Shifted from guard, has experience at center.	Dillon Day, Fr.
RG	Tobias Smith	Jr.	Must get over injuries; missed spring practice.	Templeton Hardy, Jr.
RT	Addison Lawrence*	Sr.	Has been a reliable starter in past 25 games.	Eric Lawson, Fr.
K	Derek DePasquale*	Sr.	Has a strong leg; consistent from mid-range.	Brian Egan, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Shane McCardell	Jr.	Streaky but must be consistent.	Trevor Stigers, Jr.
DT	Josh Boyd*	Jr.	Formidable in middle; 7.5 tackles for loss in 2010.	Jeffery Howie, Sr.
DT	Fletcher Cox*	Jr.	Can be dominant; blocked two kicks last year.	Devin Jones, Jr.
DE	Sean Ferguson*	Sr.	Could be poised for breakout year.	Kaleb Eulls, Fr.
LB	Cameron Lawrence	Jr.	Saw significant time in 11 games in 2010.	Chris Hughes, So.
LB	Brandon Wilson	Sr.	Best of three projected new starters at linebacker.	Jamie Jones, Sr.
LB	Deontae Skinner	So.	Versatile player who is a good speed rusher.	Matthew Wells, Fr.
CB	Johnthan Banks*	Jr.	Length makes him deceptive reading routes.	Marvin Bure, Sr.
CB	Corey Broomfield*	Jr.	Consistent in pass coverage; 3 INTs last year.	Damein Anderson, Sr.
SS	Charles Mitchell*	Sr.	Interchangeable between safety spots.	Dennis Thames, So.
FS	Nickoe Whitley*	So.	Young, fast and has a knack for PBUs down field.	Wade Bonner, Sr.
P	Baker Swedenburg	So.	Powerful leg, still working on stride.	William Berg, Jr.

*Returning Starter

BULLDOGS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Darion Arrington
Arrington is a big-time recruit who will bring a tremendous amount of athleticism to the Mississippi State secondary as a safety. In high school, Arrington, who was ranked the 11th-best 2011 prospect in Mississippi, also shined at running back, which speaks to his overall abilities. A physical safety, he'll fit in well in Starkville.

P.J. Jones
The signing of Jones was vital because he's the type of talented, physical player who should thrive at Mississippi State. Ranked second among all defensive players in Mississippi for 2011, Jones is the most highly rated prospect in the Bulldogs' class. He is built like a defensive tackle but has the athleticism of an inside linebacker.

Joseph Morrow
Morrow is still reasonably raw, but a player with his great combination of size and speed isn't easy to find. Listed as a receiver, he possibly even could line up at tight end. And because he runs the 40-yard dash in 4.55 seconds, that makes Morrow even more difficult to match up against for defensive backs and linebackers alike.

THE SLEEPER

Darius Slay
A standout in junior college last season, Slay, a defensive back, is among the best recruits in the class. And of the group, he just might be the most ready to step into a prominent role. Although he signed as a cornerback, Slay is big enough to play safety if needed.

Committments	22
Average Stars	3.05
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	1
★★★☆☆	21
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	67
National Rank: 44	SEC: 10

2012 NEEDS: Much of Mississippi State's focus in this recruiting cycle is on the defensive side of the ball. That makes sense since a lot of the Bulldogs' on-field success in 2010 was because of its defense. It's no surprise that landing a few quality defensive tackles will be a huge priority, because that's true at almost every SEC school. The Bulldogs will lose one senior there, and another player — Fletcher Cox — potentially could leave early should he produce a quality 2011 season. Elsewhere, look for Mississippi State to put great effort into finding some top-flight linebackers.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Darion Arrington	DB	6-1	215	●●●	Wiggins, MS	Stone
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 23 safety...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Taveze Calhoun	WR	6-1	180	●●●	Morton, MS	Morton
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 78 wide receiver...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Justin Cox	ATH	6-1	175	●●●	West Point, MS	West Point
Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Selected to compete in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...First-team all-state selection.						
Devin Fosselman	WR	5-10	182	●●●	Woodville, MS	Wilkinson County
Rated as the No. 14 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 72 wide receiver...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Johnathan Harris	DE	6-6	230	●●●	Boynton Beach, FL	Boynton Beach
Recorded 65 tackles, 14 tackles for loss and six sacks as a senior...Chose Mississippi State over Boston College, UCF, West Virginia and Wisconsin.						
Zachary Jackson	ATH	6-1	195	●●●	Heidelberg, MS	Heidelberg
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 38 athlete...Chose Mississippi State over Ole Miss and Southern Miss.						
P.J. Jones	DT	6-2	252	●●●●	Tupelo, MS	Tupelo
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Mississippi...Rated as the nation's No. 21 defensive tackle...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic.						
Daniel Knox	OL	6-5	248	●●●	Collinsville, MS	West Lauderdale
Caught 14 passes for 150 yards and three scores at tight end...Selected for the 62nd annual Bernard Blackwell All-Star Classic.						
James Maiden	DT	6-4	280	●●●	Woodville, MS	Wilkinson County
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 defensive tackle...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Had 52 tackles and 10 tackles for loss as a senior.						
Justin Malone	OL	6-6	305	●●●	Madison, MS	Madison Ridgeland Academy
Rated as the No. 29 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...All-State selection...Played only two years of high school football.						
Kendrick Market	DB	5-10	185	●●●	Batesville, MS	South Panola
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 40 safety...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Chose Mississippi State over Ole Miss.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Benardrick McKinney	ATH	6-4	216	●●●	Tunica, MS	Rosa Fl
Passed for 1,328 yards and 15 touchdowns while rushing for 702 yards and seven scores as a senior...Recorded 68 tackles and two interceptions on defense...Also played basketball.						
Derrick Milton	RB	5-11	191	●●●	Chatham, VA	Hargrave Military Academy
Rated as the No. 30 prospect in Virginia by Rivals.com...Rushed for 740 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior at Hargrave...Played three varsity seasons at Pineville High School in Louisiana, where he racked up almost 4,500 yards.						
Joseph Morrow	WR	6-5	200	●●●	Ocean Springs, MS	Ocean Springs
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 73 wide receiver...Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Selected to compete in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Shaquille Perry	LB	6-2	212	●●●	Walnut, MS	Walnut
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 outside linebacker...Rushed for 2,188 yards and 37 touchdowns as a senior.						
Dak Prescott	QB	6-3	220	●●●	Haughton, LA	Haughton
Rated as the No. 33 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Threw for 2,860 yards and 39 touchdowns while rushing for 951 yards and 17 scores as a senior.						
Nick Redmond	OL	6-5	312	●●●	Gulfport, MS	Harrison Central
Rated as the No. 30 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com...Chose Mississippi State over Ole Miss...Enrolled at Mississippi State in January.						
Josh Robinson	RB	5-9	198	●●●	Franklinton, LA	Franklinton
Rated as the No. 30 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 49 running back...Rushed for 1,105 yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior.						
Darius Slay	DB	6-1	193	●●●	Fulton, MS	Itawamba C.C.
Had 27 tackles in 2010...Chose Mississippi State over Kentucky, Georgia and Oklahoma State.						
Preston Smith	DE	6-6	230	●●●	Stone Mountain, GA	Stephenson
Recorded 68 tackles, 14 tackles for loss, nine sacks and five pass breakups as a senior...Chose Mississippi State over Ole Miss, Kentucky, Southern Mississippi, Minnesota, Central Florida, West Virginia, Syracuse and others.						
Joey Trapp	OL	6-5	285	●●●	Wilmington, CA	Los Angeles Harbor C.C.
First-team all-conference selection in 2010...Enrolled at Mississippi State in January.						
Rufus Warren	TE	6-5	238	●●●	Indianola, MS	Gentry
Caught 21 passes for 339 yards and five touchdowns as a senior... As a junior, caught eight passes for 138 yards and three touchdowns...Also played basketball.						

BULLDOGS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
26	Damein Anderson	DB	5-11	195	Sr.	Hazlehurst
83	Charles Bailey	WR	6-1	185	Jr.	St. Augustine, FL
87	Kenneth Baldridge	ATH	6-2	240	Fr.	Lithonia, GA
28	Vick Ballard	RB	5-11	215	Sr.	Pascagoula
13	Johnthan Banks	DB	6-2	185	Jr.	Maben
65	Ben Beckwith	ATH	6-3	295	Fr.	Benton
43	William Berg	P	5-9	195	Jr.	Nashville, TN
52	Ferlando Bohanna	LB	6-0	225	Fr.	Memphis, TN
7	Wade Bonner	DB	5-10	190	Sr.	Mason, TN
97	Josh Boyd	DL	6-3	295	Jr.	Philadelphia
25	Corey Broomfield	DB	5-10	180	Jr.	Palm
1	Chad Bumphis	WR	5-10	200	Jr.	Tupelo
41	Marvin Bure	DB	5-9	190	Sr.	Vicksburg
77	James Carmon	DL	6-7	330	Sr.	Baltimore, MD
86	Michael Carr	WR	6-1	195	So.	West Point
19	Arceto Clark	WR	5-10	180	Jr.	Verona
75	Blaine Clausell	OL	6-7	295	Fr.	Mobile, AL
88	Kendrick Cook	TE	6-3	250	Sr.	Attalla, AL
94	Fletcher Cox	DL	6-4	295	Jr.	Yazoo City
63	Dillon Day	OL	6-4	285	Fr.	West Monroe, LA
40	Derek DePasquale	K	5-8	180	Sr.	The Woodlands, TX
37	Brian Egan	K	5-10	210	So.	Prattville, AL
2	Robert Elliott	RB	6-2	210	Sr.	Okolona
92	Kaleb Eulls	DL	6-4	275	Fr.	Yazoo City
85	Sheldon Evans	ATH	6-0	180	So.	Waynesboro
6	Dylan Favre	QB	5-10	190	Fr.	Kiln
99	Sean Ferguson	DL	6-3	250	Sr.	Miami, FL
84	Reed Gordon	SN	6-4	230	Fr.	Vicksburg
32	Marcus Green	TE	6-1	240	Sr.	Scooba
29	Nick Griffin	RB	5-11	215	Fr.	New Augusta
68	Templeton Hardy	OL	6-3	300	Jr.	Como
90	John Harris	DL	6-6	225	Fr.	Boynton Beach, FL
56	Corvell Harrison-Gay	DL	6-3	250	So.	Laurel
3	Brandon Heavens	WR	5-10	175	Jr.	Bessemer, AL
23	Sylvester Hemphill	FB	5-11	235	Jr.	Olive Branch
18	Brandon Hill	TE	6-2	235	Fr.	Columbus
44	Christian Holmes	LB	6-2	225	Fr.	Puckett
93	Jeffrey Howie	DL	6-4	295	Sr.	Medina, PA
30	Jay Hughes	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Hattiesburg
34	Chris Hughes	LB	6-0	215	So.	Mobile, AL
61	Gabe Jackson	OL	6-4	310	So.	Liberty
80	Malcolm Johnson	WR	6-2	220	Fr.	Tuscaloosa, AL
81	Robert Johnson	WR	6-0	215	Fr.	Hattiesburg
33	Jamie Jones	LB	6-0	240	Sr.	Springdale, AR
60	Devin Jones	DL	6-0	255	Jr.	Olive Branch
62	Addison Lawrence	OL	6-4	290	Sr.	Coldwater
10	Cameron Lawrence	LB	6-2	225	Jr.	Coldwater
64	Eric Lawson	OL	6-6	305	Fr.	Olive Branch
39	Dane Leake	ATH	6-4	200	Fr.	Memphis, TN
16	Jameon Lewis	WR	5-8	185	Fr.	Tylertown
24	Jamerson Love	DB	5-11	175	Fr.	Aberdeen
35	Adrian Marcus	FB	5-9	225	So.	Alabaster, AL
53	Tavelle Marion	ATH	5-11	235	Jr.	Madison
96	Shane McCardell	DL	6-5	255	Jr.	Beaumont, TX
57	Ethan McKee	ATH	6-0	225	Fr.	Meridian
4	Charles Mitchell	DB	5-11	205	Sr.	Clarksdale
35	Josh Morris	ATH	5-9	190	Jr.	Wilmington, DE
48	Randy Moulds	ATH	6-3	185	Fr.	Sumter, SC
59	Archie Muniz	OL	6-5	280	Fr.	Houston, TX
16	Ivan Muniz	ATH	6-2	200	Fr.	Houston, TX
27	LaDarius Perkins	RB	5-10	190	So.	Greenville
17	Jonathan Phillips	ATH	5-11	190	Sr.	Starkville
15	Dak Prescott	QB	6-3	230	Fr.	Haughton, LA
79	Nick Redmond	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Gulfport
14	Chris Relf	QB	6-4	245	Sr.	Montgomery, AL
78	Damien Robinson	OL	6-8	310	Fr.	Olive Branch
11	Asian Ruff	ATH	6-2	175	Fr.	Fulton
17	Tyler Russell	QB	6-5	215	So.	Meridian
11	Ricco Sanders	WR	5-11	190	So.	Duncan, SC
66	Corey Sanders	ATH	5-10	210	Fr.	Forrest
55	Quentin Saulsberry	OL	6-2	300	Sr.	Coldwater
43	William Shumpert	FB	6-0	235	So.	Fulton
51	Deontae Skinner	LB	6-2	235	So.	Macon
8	Chris Smith	WR	6-2	205	Jr.	Meridian
67	Tobias Smith	OL	6-3	305	Jr.	Columbus
47	John Stathopoulos	SN	5-9	215	Fr.	Prattville, AL
69	Corbin Stewart	ATH	6-3	270	Fr.	Birminham, AL
54	Trevor Stigers	DL	6-5	245	Jr.	Ridgeland
39	Baker Swedenburg	P	6-0	185	So.	Columbus
12	Dennis Thames	DB	5-11	190	So.	Louisville
73	Paul Thompson	ATH	6-3	270	Fr.	Madison, NJ
89	Allen Tolbert	ATH	5-11	230	Jr.	Duluth, GA
76	Joey Trapp	OL	6-5	270	Jr.	Rolling Hills, CA
98	Curtis Virges	DL	6-3	300	Fr.	West Point
20	Louis Watson	DB	5-11	185	Jr.	Mobile, AL
71	Sam Watts	OL	6-4	295	So.	Conyers, GA
22	Matthew Wells	DB	6-0	205	Fr.	Monticello
5	Nickoe Whitley	DB	6-0	200	So.	Jackson
31	Sam Williams	WR	6-1	200	So.	Brandon
58	Brandon Wilson	LB	6-0	235	Sr.	Tuscaloosa, AL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
C. Relf	13	141.0	129	220	6	58.6	1789	13	81	137.6
T. Russell	9	144.5	39	67	6	58.2	635	5	57	70.6

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
C. Bumphis	12	44	634	14.4	5	57	52.8
A. Clark	13	25	362	14.5	3	33	27.8
C. Smith	12	24	264	11.0	1	19	22.0

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
V. Ballard	12	186	994	26	968	5.2	19	75	80.7
C. Relf	13	194	880	167	713	3.7	5	71	54.8
L. Perkins	13	101	596	30	566	5.6	3	51	43.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: C. White 110, K.J. Wright 98, C. Mitchell 93
Tackles for loss: C. White 15.5, P. McPhee 10, K.J. Wright 8
Sacks: C. White 6, K.J. Wright 3, two tied with 2.5
Interceptions: J. Banks 3, N. Whitley 3, C. Broomfield 3

NOTEBOOK

Mississippi State hired **Geoff Collins** as its linebackers coach and co-defensive coordinator after he helped Florida International win its first bowl game in history in 2010. He is expected to be heavily involved in scheming on game days with **Chris Wilson**, the other defensive coordinator.

"There's a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of creativity," Collins said. "And every day, we just want to get better. We want to improve upon the things that they did well last year and tweak some things to make them better."

State also promoted graduate assistant **Angelo Mirando** to receivers coach after the departure of **Mark Hudspeth**, who took the head coaching job at Louisiana.

• Tight ends coach **Scott Sallach** said he couldn't help but wonder how a couple of losses in 2010 could have been different with a healthy tight end in the game. Injuries to **Marcus Green** and Brandon Henderson limited the Bulldogs at that position last season.

"We lost Marcus so early we kind of forgot how much of a special player he could be," Sallach said. "Now we watch cut-ups in the offseason and you realize what a special cog he could be to the offense when he's healthy and running around."

Green, who caught 27 passes for 306 yards in 2009, was "65 percent" recovered in the spring from ACL surgery last fall and is expected to be full speed this season. A back injury also limited reserve tight end **Kendrick Cook** in the spring.

• Fresh off the success of the first nine-win season in 11 years, MSU is hoping to capitalize on a fiery fan base by raising money for several athletic facilities projects.

MSU is expected to begin construction on a football complex priced between $20 million and $25 million within the next few months.

Athletic director **Scott Stricklin** also is actively preparing for one of the priciest football projects in MSU's history: expansion at Davis Wade Stadium. Both projects could cost more than $100 million combined, Stricklin said.

The football complex will be funded through private donations, the biggest of which is a $12 million gift from the Seal Family of Gulfport, Miss.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this year's team:** "They're young. They finished in the top 20, and they've got a lot of people back. Good thing we don't play them. … They've lost (defensive coordinator) Manny Diaz to Texas — that will be a big factor. They win games with offense; they control the ball and play field position. Same thing Auburn did."

• **On the team's toughness:** "What he's doing offensively is tough. They've always got talent. They do a good job recruiting in-state; they always play good defense. The thing about Mississippi State to me, regardless of who the head coach is, they're physically tough. It was a battle when we played them last year. We were very concerned coming out of that game because they beat us up (physically)."

Charles Mitchell
Photo by RD Moore

ers' meeting room says it all: "The best linebackers in the SEC meet here."

It's a lofty phrase, especially when looking at the roster. Gone are Chris White and K.J. Wright, who combined for 208 tackles, two interceptions and nine sacks last season. All three starting linebackers from a year ago must be replaced. The departure of Manny Diaz as defensive coordinator also left a hole, but Chris Wilson moved up to take over the reins in the spring.

"Any time you lose three NFL players from your defensive roster, you are different," Wilson said. "The concepts will be really similar, so conceptually things don't change."

That means State will continue to "hammer your run game" and "knock your quarterback down" while lining up in multiple sets, Wilson said. "If we need to (blitz) you 80 times, we'll come at you 80 times," he said.

"How we'll be different is we'll get to it differently. We'll evolve. Obviously we're a little bit more advanced than we were a year ago."

MSU has depth in the secondary, with all four starters from 2010 returning.

The Bulldogs added Geoff Collins to the staff as the linebackers coach and co-defensive coordinator. The former Florida International defensive coordinator, concurring with Mullen, believed his unit took the biggest steps in the spring. State is also expecting to add some depth at middle linebacker with incoming graduate transfer Brandon Maye from Clemson, although Brandon Wilson appeared to have secured the starting spot in the spring.

Said Collins: "The expectations around here are very high. The front four, for the most part, is back. The back four, for the most part, is back. And everybody is kind of looking at the linebackers. Who is going to step up? Who is going to keep this thing where it's heading?"

The defensive line will be a mixed bag of challenges. Defensive tackles Fletcher Cox and Josh Boyd wreaked havoc in spring scrimmages. Defensive end Sean Ferguson could prove big, but the other side of the line is downright "scary," Mullen said — and not in a good way.

The Bulldogs might just have to get creative on defense, using linebacker Deontae Skinner as a speed rusher off the edge.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Derek DePasquale's leg will give MSU some support in the kicking game.

Mullen expected several miscues in the spring with a new holder, deep snapper and punter, but he was pleasantly surprised at the results.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Vick Ballard

Ballard's improvement as the season progressed last year helped expand State's offense. ... In 2010, the junior college transfer set the school record for rushing touchdowns (19) in a season, despite sharing snaps with LaDarius Perkins. ... Ballard rushed for 968 yards, and his 19 touchdowns were third all-time in the SEC, although the league never honored him with a weekly award. ... He rushed for at least one score in 10 of 12 games, including four games with three rushing scores.

EMERGING STAR

WR Chad Bumphis

Bumphis has always been considered the go-to receiver at MSU, and he solidified his spot in the spring when he bounced back from a collarbone injury. ... He led all receivers with 634 yards and five touchdowns last season before missing most of the final two games with the injury. ... The junior played some quarterback in the Wildcat early in 2010, but he's at his best in space and when catching the football at full speed in the middle of the field.

TOP NEWCOMER

LB Brandon Maye

Maye plans to transfer to MSU from Clemson after earning his undergraduate degree in May. ... The 6-2, 235-pounder is expected to compete immediately for the starting spot at middle linebacker. ... He started in 33 games for the Tigers, piled up 233 tackles and established a school single-season record with five forced fumbles in 2009. ... He planned to seek leniency from the NCAA in May to allow him to play immediately with one year of eligibility remaining as he seeks a graduate degree in sports administration at MSU.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	15.3	115
Rushing	100.6	105
Passing	174.3	94
Total	274.9	113
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.7	60
Rushing	150.9	73
Passing	176.6	17
Total	327.5	35
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	81

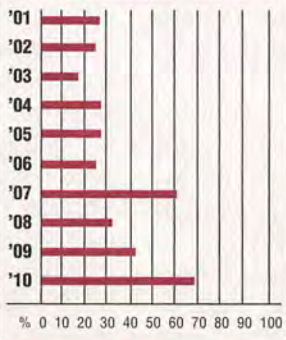
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.6	72
Rushing	227.6	9
Passing	144.3	113
Total	371.9	65
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	26.8	71
Rushing	146.0	62
Passing	220.0	64
Total	366.0	58
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 5	- 0.42	87

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.0	48
Rushing	214.9	16
Passing	186.5	86
Total	401.3	42
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.9	21
Rushing	119.1	15
Passing	237.8	91
Total	356.9	49
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.54	27

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

9-4, 4-4

W	MEMPHIS	49-7
L	AUBURN	14-17
L	at LSU	7-29
W	GEORGIA	24-12
W	ALCORN STATE	49-16
W	at Houston	47-24
W	at Florida	10-7
W	UAB	29-24
W	KENTUCKY	24-17
L	at Alabama	10-30
L	ARKANSAS (OT)	31-38
W	at Ole Miss	31-23
	Gator Bowl	
W	vs. Michigan	52-14

PLAYER PROFILE

Chris Relf
Photo by RD Moore

State's Quarterback Might be Cam-like

When fans think of Mississippi State, they rarely list a fearful lineup of quarterbacks.

In fact, you'd have to look back more than 20 years to see a familiar name that worried opposing defenses. But Chris Relf, a senior, may finally buck that trend this fall.

Relf, a quiet 22-year-old who was only a two-star recruit out of Montgomery, Ala., had a breakout season in 2010. He threw for 1,789 yards and 13 touchdowns while running for 713 yards. In the process, he turned a lot of heads — none more important than coach Dan Mullen.

But questions remain for the 6-4, 240-pound quarterback. Mullen has been pushing Relf to be more vocal and show more leadership on the field.

"Can he, as adversity strikes, get everybody locked back in?" Mullen asked. "That is going to be the key and that's the hardest part as a leader: When things go bad, can you stop it and get it turned around in the other direction."

Relf likely will draw comparisons to former Auburn quarterback and Heisman Trophy winner Cam Newton. Sure, the talent isn't exactly on the same level, but their playing styles and physiques are similar.

Relf is a hard runner, will knock over a linebacker or two and seemingly gets three yards or more with every run – just enough to keep the offense moving down field when the throws are not getting it done.

"I think this year is going to be my year," Relf said. "I'm confident; I've got a year in the offense, and it's just a matter of me going out there and making plays and just leading this team."

Relf broke through in a two-quarterback system early last season, and 2011 should prove to be his first full season as a starter. He's throwing the football about 1,000 times a day to prepare for his final season.

"I'm thinking about football all the time," Relf said.

"The great thing was Chris was very, very efficient in the spring and took a step forward," Mullen said.

Surprisingly, this two-star project out of high school is now an SEC starter, while *Parade All-Americans* Tyler Russell and Dylan Favre are Relf's backups.

"(Mullen) coached me up a lot," Relf said. "I think it was just a matter of me going out there and doing what Coach Mullen told me."

Punter Baker Swedenburg booted a few 60-yarders in the spring, and there was rarely a botched snap or hold.

DePasquale was 10 of 12 on field-goal attempts last season, but he readily admits that his new holder, quarterback Dylan Favre, has struggled at times. Favre is the nephew of former NFL great Brett Favre.

"It's like trying to hit a golf ball and the wind is blowing it and moving it away from where it was originally," DePasquale joked.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Mississippi State figures to start the season in many Top 25 rankings — and the Bulldogs will have an early chance to prove their worth.

The toughest challenge of the season is from Sept. 10 to Sept. 15, as the Bulldogs follow a trip to defending national champion Auburn with a Thursday night game at home against LSU.

A 3-0 start to the season would lift the Bulldogs ahead in the SEC West and push them into the Top 10 before the end of September. It would also give third-year coach Dan Mullen his first wins against an SEC West team other than Ole Miss.

The back end of the schedule is tough with Alabama (Nov. 12) and Arkansas (Nov. 19) on consecutive weeks. The good news is that the toughest trip after Auburn is Georgia (Oct. 1), which lost to MSU last season.

— Brandon Marcello

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	at Memphis	1-11
Sept. 10	at Auburn	14-0
Sept. 15	LSU	11-2
Sept. 24	LOUISIANA TECH	5-7
Oct. 1	at Georgia	6-7
Oct. 8	at UAB	4-8
Oct. 15	SOUTH CAROLINA	9-5
Oct. 29	at Kentucky	6-7
Nov. 5	TENNESSEE MARTIN	6-5
Nov. 12	ALABAMA	10-3
Nov. 19	at Arkansas	10-3
Nov. 26	OLE MISS	4-8

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SOUTH CAROLINA GAMECOCKS

For more coverage of the Gamecocks, visit southcarolina.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Spurrier | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ellis Johnson** | **STADIUM: Williams-Brice Stadium: 80,250**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
9-5, 5-3 SEC (1st, East)

COACH:
Steve Spurrier — At South Carolina: 44-33, 6 years; overall: 186-73-2, 21 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
13; 6 offense, 7 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
WR Alshon Jeffery, RB Marcus Lattimore, QB Stephen Garcia, DB Stephon Gilmore, DE Devin Taylor, DT Travian Robertson, SPUR DeVonte Holloman, DE Jadeveon Clowney

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Few teams around the country return the kind of experience in front-end starters at quarterback, tailback and receiver. The defense didn't have much trouble getting to the quarterback last season and could be even better this year with Clowney in the mix.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The offensive line has three new starters and will put a lot of inexperience on the field between a handful of redshirt and true freshmen. The secondary really hurt the Gamecocks last year and doesn't have the kind of quality depth it needs this season. It'll hope the front-line talent can avoid disaster.

KEY LOSSES:
FB Patrick DiMarco, OL Garrett Chisolm, WR Tori Gurley, DE Cliff Matthews, DT Ladi Ajiboye

OVERVIEW:
The Gamecocks return enough talent to repeat as SEC East champions and return to Atlanta for the conference title game, but there are enough issues — including depth at key positions and Garcia's antics — that it's far from guaranteed. South Carolina will benefit from another year of uncertainty across the division as Spurrier continues his quest to truly win big with this program.

Elite Talent Gives Gamecocks Hope for a BCS Run

Steve Spurrier doesn't sound like the coach of a preseason Top 25 team looking to repeat as champion in one of college football's toughest divisions.

"Our team is not near as good as maybe some people think we're going to be," said the seventh-year South Carolina coach, whose team won the SEC East last season.

"We're an unknown team that's got a lot of work ahead of us to have a chance to be a good team in the coming season."

The actions of starting quarterback Stephen Garcia affirmed Spurrier's words this spring. The fifth-year senior was suspended twice in a matter of a month — once for a team violation during bowl week last December and another by the university for inappropriate behavior.

During the summer, he faced specific, undisclosed requirements in order to return from the fifth suspension in his Gamecock career.

Even before all that, Spurrier threatened another quarterback change after Garcia's rough performance in the Chick-fil-A Bowl. However, to have a big season, South Carolina likely needs Garcia. The next-in-line quarterback is sophomore Connor Shaw, who's never started a collegiate game.

Beyond quarterback, several key pieces are in place off a team that returns 13 starters from a squad that went 9-5 overall and 5-3 in the SEC last year. The Gamecocks possess the rare fortune of having experience and immense talent at the other skill positions: running back Marcus Lattimore and receiver Alshon Jeffery, each *Lindy's* preseason All-Americans.

The defense added the nation's top recruit — defensive end Jadeveon Clowney — to a line that helped South Carolina lead the SEC in sacks a year ago, and the unit returns two All-SEC first-team selections.

Still, there are reasons for Spurrier's curbed enthusiasm.

"Our offensive line has really got to come around. The quarterbacks have got to come around," Spurrier said. "On defense, our linebackers have never really played much at all. I don't know who is going to be our kicker."

Nonetheless, Spurrier feels that a solid summer can fix a lot of issues — if he gets the commitment he desires.

"I've always believed summer is more important than spring," he said. "Hopefully our guys are going to want to try to get fundamentally sound, learn their assignments and be ready to go in August when we start preseason practice."

The players are eager to wash some bad tastes out of their mouths and put together something bigger — like an SEC title and the school's first BCS bid.

A 56-17 drubbing by eventual BCS champion Auburn and a 26-17 bowl loss to Florida State kept South Carolina from just its second 10-win season in school history.

"It hurt to lose. We didn't do what we had to do those two games," Lattimore said. "If we would've executed, if we would've stayed on playing, we would've won. That's what we're going to try to do this year every game."

OFFENSE

Stephen Garcia might be the piece to solve the overall puzzle, but Marcus Lattimore is the engine that makes the offense go.

After rushing for 1,197 yards and scoring 19 touchdowns as a freshman last season, he returns as one of the best running backs in the country. Add in junior Kenny Miles, who's averaged more than five yards per carry in his

Alshon Jeffery
Photo by Dale Zanine-US PRESSWIRE

career, and Eric Baker, who's back after two consecutive seasons of knee surgeries, and the Gamecocks sport one of the league's best backfields.

"We are in good shape (at tailback)," Spurrier said.

They should help take some of the load off Lattimore, who burst onto the scene in the second game of his career when he carried 37 times for 182 yards against Georgia.

Having the 6-4 Alshon Jeffery back for another season will help the running and passing game. The junior wideout was one of three Biletnikoff finalists a year ago after posting 1,517 yards on 88 catches and nine touchdowns.

The Gamecocks lost receiver Tori Gurley, who left early for the NFL, but South Carolina still has plenty of good hands. D.L. Moore is the same height as Jeffery and came on late last season. Ace Sanders will provide speed in the slot, and DeAngelo Smith had the best spring of any Gamecock player, earning high praise from Spurrier.

"I think we're going to have an excellent group of receivers. I really do," Spurrier said. "We're going to have speed and quickness, but if we can't throw correctly and pass block very well, it doesn't matter how good those guys are."

The first part of that equation is reliant on Garcia, the SEC's most experienced returning quarterback who ranks third on the school's career passing list. Shaw didn't have a particularly strong spring and hasn't progressed as much as the coaches would've liked. He is also more of a running threat.

"I'm going to compete to the best of my ability," Shaw said. "If I'm called on to be a starter or play, I'm going to be ready to play."

How either quarterback performs behind South Carolina's revamped offensive line is the key to success.

Three new starters and a pair of newcomers will have to learn quickly for a program that hasn't showcased an above average line during Spurrier's tenure.

"We've got to develop some young guys," second-year offensive line coach Shawn Elliott said. "We're heading in the right direction. These guys can be good football players."

DEFENSE

Valentine's Day, 2011, could be a day Gamecock fans never forget. That was the day Jadeveon Clowney, the top recruit in the country, signed to play with South Carolina.

The 6-6, 250-pound defensive end, by many accounts, is one of the most talented prospects in recent college football recruiting because of his size, speed and power. And Spurrier hopes he begins living up to the hype sooner rather than later.

"Certainly he'll have an opportunity

Marcus Lattimore
Photo by Don Kelly/Sportpics

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Stephen Garcia*	Sr.	The SEC's leading returning passer.	Connor Shaw, So.
TB	Marcus Lattimore*	So.	SEC Freshman of the Year is tough to bring down.	Kenny Miles, Jr.
WR	Alshon Jeffery*	Jr.	Size and hands make him difficult to defend.	DeAngelo Smith, So.
WR	D.L. Moore	Jr.	Should see a lot more passes with Tori Gurley gone.	Nick Jones, Fr.
WR	Ace Sanders	So.	Small speedster will be a threat in the slot.	Jason Barnes, Sr.
TE	Justice Cunningham	Jr.	Known more for blocking ability.	Corey Simmons, Fr.
LT	Kyle Nunn*	Sr.	Has made 16 career starts.	Brandon Shell, Fr.
LG	A.J. Cann	Fr.	Spent a year getting in shape and learning.	Kenny Davis, Jr.
C	T.J. Johnson*	Jr.	A starter in every game of his career.	Ryan Broadhead, Sr.
RG	Terrence Campbell	Sr.	Sixth-year senior has most experience on line.	Kaleb Broome, Jr.
RT	Rokevious Watkins*	Sr.	Started all 14 games last season.	Cody Gibson, Fr.
K	Jay Wooten	Sr.	In a tight battle with two other kickers.	Joey Scribner-Howard, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Devin Taylor*	Jr.	Made All-SEC last year with 7.5 sacks.	Byron McKnight, Sr.
DT	Travian Robertson*	Sr.	Real anchor of the defensive line.	Byron Jerideau, Jr.
DT	Kelcy Quarles	Fr.	Early enrollee shined during spring.	Aldrick Fordham, Jr.
DE	Jadeveon Clowney	Fr.	Nation's No. 1 recruit expects to play early.	Melvin Ingram, Sr.
LB	Shaq Wilson	Jr.	Played once in '10 because of hamstring injury.	Reginald Bowens, Jr.
LB	Rodney Paulk*	Sr.	Worked hard in offseason to get healthy.	Quin Smith, Jr.
SPUR	DeVonte Holloman*	Jr.	Moved from strong safety in the spring.	Antonio Allen, Sr.
CB	Stephon Gilmore*	Jr.	May be team's best overall athlete.	Victor Hampton, Fr.
CB	Akeem Auguste*	Sr.	Much happier since moving back from safety.	C.C. Whitlock, Sr.
SS	D.J. Swearinger*	Jr.	One of the team's hardest hitters.	Sharrod Golightly, Fr.
FS	Jimmy Legree	So.	Finally came on with a big spring.	Brison Williams, Fr.
P	Patrick Fish	Fr.	Just like at kicker, this spot up for grabs.	Jay Wooten, Sr.

*Returning Starter

GAMECOCKS RECRUITING 2011

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Damiere Byrd
South Carolina has plenty of fine receivers, but Byrd, a four-star recruit from New Jersey, is good enough to see the field. Head coach Steve Spurrier has never hesitated to play a freshman. A short and shifty speedster, Byrd is a nice alternative to the Gamecocks' mostly big and tall starting receivers.

Jadeveon Clowney
The country's No. 1 overall prospect, Clowney is a dominating defensive end with talents that are both exceptional and incredibly rare. At the high school level, he was an unstoppable force whom some pundits have called the best football prospect in years. A starting spot in Columbia likely awaits him.

Phillip Dukes
Dukes did not merit the same amount of attention as Clowney, but don't kid yourself — he was an incredibly significant piece of the 2011 Gamecocks class. A defensive tackle with both great size and technique, Dukes is a physical presence and hard-nosed player who possesses a mean streak.

THE SLEEPER

Shamier Jeffery
The younger brother of standout Gamecocks receiver Alshon Jeffery, Shamier is another big, strong player at the wideout spot. There are some who believe he has the potential to be every bit as good, if not better, than Alshon. Supposedly, he's the faster of the two right now.

Committments	32
Average Stars	3.25
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	6
★★★☆☆	25
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	104
National Rank: 18	SEC: 7

2012 NEEDS: Because the Gamecocks are a veteran team, they have several needs. Although South Carolina signed five offensive linemen in 2011, the Gamecocks likely will grab a few more since three projected starters are seniors. It also wouldn't be a shock if they again inked two running backs. Marcus Lattimore is only a sophomore, but could leave early for the pros. The three backs behind him on the depth chart are each juniors. On defense, every projected starter is either a junior or senior, meaning the time to restock is now.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jerell Adams	TE	6-5	220	★★★	Summerton, SC	Scotts Branch
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 17 tight end...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Rory Anderson	TE	6-4	200	★★★	Powder Springs, GA	Mceachern
Rated as the No. 43 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 tight end.						
K.J. Brent	WR	6-4	180	★★★	Waxhaw, NC	Marvin Ridge
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 54 wide receiver...Participated in NUC All-World Bowl.						
Kaleb Broome	OL	6-6	315	★★★	Milledgeville, GA	Georgia Military College
Chose South Carolina over East Carolina and Georgia Southern...Enrolled at South Carolina in January.						
Damiere Byrd	WR	5-9	165	★★★★	Sicklerville, NJ	Timber Creek
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in New Jersey...Rated as the nation's No. 19 wide receiver...Participated in NUC All-World Bowl.						
Shon Carson	RB	5-10	195	★★★	Scranton, SC	Lake City
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 28 running back...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Ahmad Christian	ATH	5-10	190	★★★	Jacksonville, FL	Trinity Christian
Rated as the No. 84 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 39 athlete.						
Jadeveon Clowney	DE	6-6	250	★★★★★	Rock Hill, SC	South Pointe
Rated as the nation's No. 1 overall prospect by Rivals.com...Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in South Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 1 strongside defensive end...Chose South Carolina over Alabama, Clemson and Florida State among others.						
Cedrick Cooper	LB	6-2	205	★★★	Lithonia, GA	Lithonia
Rated as the No. 65 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 61 outside linebacker.						
Gerald Dixon	DE	6-2	260	★★★	Rock Hill, SC	South Pointe
Rated as the No. 14 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 25 weakside defensive end...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
Gerald Dixon Jr.	DT	6-2	280	★★★	Rock Hill, SC	Northwestern
Recorded 100 tackles, 10 sacks, eight tackles for loss and two interceptions as a senior...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
Phillip Dukes	DT	6-3	295	★★★★	Manning, SC	Manning
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in South Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 9 defensive tackle...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Deon Green	DT	6-3	270	★★★	Orlando, FL	Olympia
Rated as the nation's No. 50 defensive tackle by Rivals.com...Recorded 68 tackles, 14 tackles for loss and two sacks as a senior.						
Kyle Harris	OL	6-3	260	★★★	Lindale, GA	Pepperell
Rated as the No. 52 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 offensive guard...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Mason Harris	LB	6-3	210	★★★	Rossville, GA	Ridgeland
Rated as the No. 48 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 47 outside linebacker.						
Shamier Jeffery	WR	6-2	195	★★★	St. Matthews, SC	Calhoun County
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 53 wide receiver...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Kadetrix Marcus	DB	6-0	182	★★★	Stone Mountain, GA	Stephenson
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 3 safety...Participated in NUC All-World Classic.						
Ronnie Martin	DB	5-11	175	★★★	Spartanburg, SC	Spartanburg
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 46 cornerback...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
Martay Mattox	QB	6-1	185	★★★	Athens, GA	Clarke Central
Rated as the No. 68 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 dual-threat quarterback.						
Mike Matulis	OL	6-6	275	★★★	Lake Worth, FL	Park Vista
Rated as the No. 65 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 33 offensive tackle.						
Tanner McEvoy	ATH	6-5	200	★★★	Oradell, NJ	Bergen Catholic
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 25 athlete.						
Quincy McKinney	OL	6-4	295	★★★	Columbus, GA	Carver
Rated as the No. 62 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 61 offensive tackle.						
Edward Muldrow	LB	6-3	190	★★★	Snellville, GA	South Gwinnett
Rated as the No. 50 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 49 outside linebacker.						
Drew Owens	TE	6-5	227	★★★	Charlotte, NC	Ardrey Kell
Rated as the No. 14 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 tight end.						
Kelcy Quarles	DT	6-4	265	★★★★	Fork Union, VA	Fork Union Military Academy
Rated as the No. 3 prep school prospect in the country by Rivlas.com...Originally signed with South Carolina in 2010.						
Marcquis Roberts	LB	6-1	205	★★★	Powder Springs, GA	Mceachern
Rated as the No. 30 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 22 outside linebacker.						
Sheldon Royster	DB	6-0	185	★★★★	Jersey City, NJ	St. Peter-s Prep
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in South Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 12 safety.						
Brandon Shell	OL	6-7	290	★★★★	Charleston, SC	Goose Creek
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in South Carolina...Rated as the nation's No. 4 offensive tackle...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Will Sport	OL	6-6	275	★★★	Pace, FL	Pace
Chose South Carolina over FAU, FIU, USF, Southern Miss and UCF.						
Angelo Watley	LB	6-3	230	★★★	Suwanee, GA	Peachtree Ridge
Rated as the No. 80 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com.						
Brandon Wilds	RB	6-0	217	★★★	Blythewood, SC	Blythewood
Rated as the No. 30 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Chose South Carolina over East Carolina, Illinois, Maryland and MTSU.						
Brison Williams	DB	5-10	199	★★★★	Fork Union, VA	Fork Union Military Academy
Rated as the No. 6 prep school prospect in the country by Rivlas.com...Originally signed with South Carolina in 2010.						

GAMECOCKS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
7	Corey Addison	SS	6-0	209	So.	Jacksonville, FL
26	Antonio Allen	Spur	6-2	208	Sr.	Ocala, FL
3	Akeem Auguste	CB	5-10	183	Sr.	Hollywood, FL
28	Eric Baker	TB	5-11	204	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
43	Jacob Baker	TB	5-9	191	Jr.	Ridgeland
4	Jason Barnes	WR	6-4	213	Sr.	Charlotte, NC
20	Joshua Blue	TB	5-6	178	Fr.	Tatum
32	Reginald Bowens	LB	6-2	246	Jr.	Holly Springs, NC
15	Payton Brady	TE	6-3	225	Jr.	Lincolnton, NC
65	Ryan Broadhead	OC	6-5	270	Sr.	Leesburg, GA
74	Kaleb Broome	OT	6-5	319	Jr.	Aiken
85	Zach Broome	WR	6-3	205	Fr.	Richmond Hill, GA
40	Billy Byrne	FB	5-11	233	So.	Palm Harbor, FL
60	Terrence Campbell	OG	6-3	295	Sr.	Austell, GA
50	A.J. Cann	OG	6-3	305	Fr.	Bamberg
12	Andrew Clifford	QB	6-2	221	So.	Tampa, FL
48	Matt Coffee	FB	5-11	230	So.	Mary Esther, FL
87	Justice Cunningham	TE	6-3	262	Jr.	Pageland
42	Eric Davis	P	6-2	170	Jr.	Newberry
72	Kenny Davis	OG	6-3	310	Jr.	Newberry
15	Patrick Fish	P	5-11	190	Fr.	Shelby, NC
61	Travis Ford	OC	6-2	265	So.	Fork
57	Aldrick Fordham	DE	6-4	273	Jr.	Jamestown
5	Stephen Garcia	QB	6-2	230	Sr.	Lutz, FL
78	Cody Gibson	OT	6-6	282	Fr.	Tallahassee, FL
84	Cody Gilbert	WR	6-1	180	Fr.	Inman
43	Qua Gilchrist	LB	6-1	241	Jr.	Abbeville
5	Stephon Gilmore	CB	6-1	194	Jr.	Rock Hill
9	Sharrod Golightly	FS	5-10	179	Fr.	Decatur, GA
29	Chaun Gresham	TE	6-1	248	So.	Auburn, GA
27	Victor Hampton	CB	5-9	194	Fr.	Darlington
57	C.J. Heinz	P	6-2	193	Jr.	Irmo
17	Josh Hinch	TB	5-7	180	Sr.	Knoxville, TN
21	DeVonte Holloman	SS	6-2	226	Jr.	Charlotte, NC
51	Walker Inabinet	DS	5-9	198	Jr.	Columbia
6	Melvin Ingram	DE	6-2	271	Sr.	Hamlet, NC
1	Alshon Jeffery	WR	6-4	233	Jr.	St. Matthews
33	Damario Jeffery	Spur	6-3	230	Jr.	Columbia
70	Byron Jerideau	DT	6-0	315	Jr.	Green Pond
55	T.J. Johnson	OC	6-4	314	Jr.	Aynor
13	Nick Jones	WR	5-8	189	Fr.	Moore
21	Marcus Lattimore	TB	6-0	231	So.	Duncan
35	Jimmy Legree	CB	5-11	180	So.	Beaufort
39	Marty Markett	CB	5-10	166	Sr.	York
8	Martay Mattox	CB	6-1	186	Fr.	Athens, GA
92	Byron McKnight	DE	6-5	242	Sr.	Laurinburg, NC
31	Kenny Miles	TB	5-10	184	Jr.	Lawrenceville, GA
82	D.L. Moore	WR	6-4	212	Jr.	Bowling Green, KY
62	Davis Moore	DS	6-0	213	So.	Buford, GA
90	Joshua Newton	PK	6-1	190	Jr.	Aiken
68	Kyle Nunn	OT	6-5	296	Sr.	Sumter
31	Matt O'Brien	Spur	5-11	183	So.	New Milford, NJ
67	Ronald Patrick	OG	6-1	295	So.	Cocoa, FL
45	Rodney Paulk	LB	6-0	229	Sr.	Columbia
99	Kelcy Quarles	DT	6-3	271	Fr.	Hodges
42	Travian Robertson	DT	6-4	298	Sr.	Laurinburg, NC
94	Corey Robinson	DT	6-6	333	Fr.	Havelock, NC
9	Ace Sanders	WR	5-7	173	So.	Bradenton, FL
10	Cadarious Sanders	CB	5-11	182	Fr.	LaGrange, GA
46	Joey Scribner-Howard	PK	6-1	212	Sr.	Irmo
8	Lamar Scruggs	WR	6-3	226	So.	Jacksonville Beach, FL
14	Connor Shaw	QB	6-1	202	So.	Flowery Branch, GA
28	Jared Shaw	FS	5-10	192	Jr.	Fort Mill
22	Bryce Sherman	WR	5-4	157	Jr.	Winston-Salem, NC
95	Corey Simmons	TE	6-4	263	Fr.	Lawrenceville, GA
19	DeAngelo Smith	WR	6-0	191	So.	Kingsland, GA
24	Quin Smith	LB	6-0	230	Jr.	Lenoir, NC
11	Seth Strickland	QB	6-2	193	Jr.	Laurens
97	J.T. Surratt	DT	6-1	308	Fr.	Winston-Salem, NC
90	Chaz Sutton	DE	6-4	245	So.	Savannah, GA
36	D.J. Swearinger	FS	5-11	206	Jr.	Greenwood
98	Devin Taylor	DE	6-7	248	Jr.	Beaufort
7	Dylan Thompson	QB	6-2	208	Fr.	Boiling Springs
89	Mike Triglia	TE	6-4	240	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
73	Rokevious Watkins	OG	6-4	319	Sr.	Fairburn, GA
12	C.C. Whitlock	CB	5-10	181	Sr.	Chester
4	Brison Williams	SS	5-10	206	Fr.	Warner Robins, GA
83	Michael Williamson	P	6-2	185	So.	Norway
46	Dalton Wilson	FB	6-1	220	Jr.	Williston
16	Shaq Wilson	LB	5-11	233	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
25	Alonzo Winfield	FS	6-0	223	Sr.	Winston-Salem, NC
18	Jay Wooten	P/PK	6-3	203	Sr.	Laurinburg, NC
81	Adam Yates	PK	6-1	223	Jr.	Sparks, MD

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
S. Garcia	14	148.7	224	349	14	64.2	3059	20	72	218.5
C. Shaw	9	124.3	23	33	2	69.7	223	1	21	24.8

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
A. Jeffery	14	88	1517	17.2	9	72	108.4
T. Gurley	14	44	465	10.6	4	30	33.2
M. Lattimore	13	29	412	14.2	2	53	31.7

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
M. Lattimore	13	249	1230	33	1197	4.8	17	58	92.1
B. Maddox	14	74	403	12	391	5.3	3	38	27.9
S. Garcia	14	105	387	165	222	2.1	6	22	15.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: S. Gilmore 79, A. Allen 70, D. Holloman 69
Tackles for loss: D. Taylor 13, M. Ingram 11, A. Allen 10.5
Sacks: M. Ingram 9, D. Taylor 7.5, C. Matthews 5.5
Interceptions: S. Gilmore 3, D. Holloman 2, five tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Bruce Ellington, who led the basketball team in scoring at 12.8 points per game as a freshman guard last year, will join the football team this fall. The sophomore turned down several major offers for football out of high school after playing quarterback, running back and defensive back.

Steve Spurrier said Ellington likely will be used as a slot receiver and possible kick returner. Ellington, who plans on returning to hoops in the winter, has also pitched the "Wildcat" package to his coaches.

"I just decided to play football because I missed it," he said. "I played in high school and all my life, so it's been on my mind for a while."

• The Gamecocks signed a 32-player class, which ranked among the national Top 25. Four enrolled early so the team could get under the 28-man limit.

Several newcomers, including **Jadeveon Clowney** and **Brandon Shell**, have a chance to play right away. Others will make an immediate impact on special teams, like 5-9 speedster **Damiere Byrd**.

And during spring drills, Spurrier said he had to remind his coaches that the influx of talent can change the dynamics of his team this year.

"Our team is not what it's going to be until September rolls around and we get ready for the first game against East Carolina," he said.

• Spurrier received a raise over the offseason, bumping his annual pay to $2.8 million this season to put him in the upper half in SEC salaries. He did not get an extension, and his contract is set to run out in 2013. The 66-year-old has shown no signs of ending his career and has stated publicly that he's already coached longer than he ever planned.

• Along with the addition of special teams coach **John Butler**, Spurrier changed up some of his staff's coaching duties.

Former tight ends coach **Jeep Hunter** was moved to defense and is working with the safeties. Running back coach **Jay Graham** added tight ends to his duties, and receivers coach **Steve Spurrier Jr.** is also the new recruiting coordinator with the loss of Beamer.

"This evens out the workload of the staff a lot better," Spurrier said.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On Steve Spurrier:** "Steve (Spurrier) does a really good job. I think he's used to doing it all himself. On defense he's got Ellis Johnson, probably the best defensive coordinator in the league as far as getting the most out of the least. Steve, he's so quirky, but he's a helluva coach."

• **On this season:** "I expect South Carolina to be good again. They've got the main pieces returning. There's no reason to think they won't be as good or as productive. They also lost a few games they should have won last year. But Spurrier can find a way to win. He can get a team ready to play and go win. He's phenomenal that way. One thing about South Carolina, the last 4-5 years they have not been a good road team, but they are really hard to beat in Columbia."

Antonio Allen
Photo by Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images

to come in an earn a starting position just like Marcus Lattimore did last year," Spurrier said.

"Winning the (SEC) East and getting a player like Jadeveon ... he could have gone to Alabama, Florida, Ohio State — any of the glamour schools — but he chose to come to us."

He certainly won't hurt a defense that needs to stop the pass better.

South Carolina ranked as one of the top three in the SEC in defense in 2009, but a severe decline in pass defense left it sitting at seventh at the end of 2010.

Now, the Gamecocks return enough starting talent to give the coaches hope for major improvement.

The defensive line lost stalwart Ladi Ajiboye but showcases enough depth, along with Clowney, to rank among the league's elite for the second consecutive season. Devin Taylor, Melvin Ingram and Travian Robertson are major returning factors.

The linebacking corps, however, isn't nearly as deep.

Shaq Wilson was the leading tackler in 2009 but missed nearly all of last season because of a severe hamstring injury. Along with sixth-year senior Rodney Paulk, that's all the battle-tested experience South Carolina has. Junior Quin Smith showed promise at times last season, but former safety DeVonte Holloman's move to the "Spur" hybrid position will help the overall defense.

Cornerback Stephon Gilmore highlights a unit in need of depth as well. Akeem Auguste moves back to his original spot opposite Gilmore after playing a year at safety. D.J. Swearinger is learning to play with more discipline at free safety and has emerged as a better leader, but a new starter will play strong safety.

Two true freshmen safeties — Brison Williams and Martay Mattox — will be forced into backup roles. How quickly the young guys come along will determine the defense's fate.

"We're a long way from being able to lineup in this conference," South Carolina head defensive coach Ellis Johnson said. "When you look at the big picture, I think we're a long, long way from being a quality defense."

SPECIAL TEAMS

New special teams coordinator John Butler, who came from Minnesota, replaced Shane Beamer, who left for Virginia Tech, during the offseason. Butler faces a tough task with what's been

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Marcus Lattimore

Lattimore made a big name for himself in 2010 when he rushed for 1,197 yards and scored 19 touchdowns as a true freshman. ... He's transformed the Steve Spurrier pass-happy offense into a run-first (and often) system. ... Lattimore added 15 pounds during the offseason to handle a heavy workload. ... He missed a game-and-a-half during the regular season with an ankle injury and suffered a mouth injury in the first quarter of the bowl game against Florida State.

EMERGING STAR

DE Devin Taylor

Taylor turned a promising freshman season in 2009 into a breakout year in 2010. ... His 7.5 sacks ranked second on the team and fourth in the conference on his way to earning first-team All-SEC honors. ... Taylor led the defensive line with 46 tackles. ... He spent the offseason adding more weight to his 6-7 frame. ... His elite speed makes him a terror. ... Flashed his athleticism against Tennessee last year when he picked off a pass and ran 24 yards for a touchdown.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Jadeveon Clowney

One of the most hyped recruits nationally in years, Clowney chose the in-state Gamecocks over Alabama and Clemson on national television. ... At 6-6, 250 pounds, he expects to come in right away and make an impact; with lightning speed and a motor that never stops, he'll have a good chance to live up to the billing. ... He'll start out competing with Melvin Ingram for playing time. ... Clowney recorded 128 tackles, 19.5 sacks and 10 forced fumbles as a senior at South Pointe High School.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.8	96
Rushing	94.1	112
Passing	222.5	50
Total	316.5	97
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.1	31
Rushing	132.7	43
Passing	159.2	2
Total	291.9	13
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 11	- 0.85	107

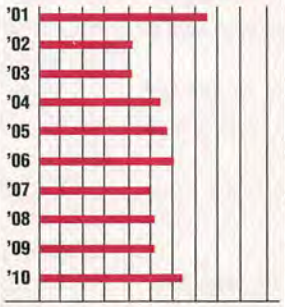
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.6	102
Rushing	121.2	91
Passing	226.2	47
Total	347.4	82
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.4	24
Rushing	137.7	52
Passing	163.0	8
Total	300.7	15
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.31	81

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.9	38
Rushing	154.4	60
Passing	238.4	44
Total	392.8	47
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.1	43
Rushing	112.4	12
Passing	241.9	97
Total	354.4	46
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 0	+ 0.00	55

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

9-5, 5-3

W	SOUTHERN MISS	41-13
W	GEORGIA	17-6
W	FURMAN	38-19
L	at Auburn	27-35
W	ALABAMA	35-21
L	at Kentucky	28-31
W	at Vanderbilt	21-7
W	TENNESSEE	38-24
L	ARKANSAS	20-41
W	at Florida	36-14
W	TROY	69-24
W	at Clemson	29-7
	SEC Championship Game	
L	Auburn	17-56
	Chick-fil-A Bowl	
L	vs. Florida State	17-26

PLAYER PROFILE

Stephon Gilmore
Photo by Frankie Creel-US PRESSWIRE

Big Junior Year Will Make Gilmore Happy

Stephon Gilmore admits he didn't have the kind of lights-out season he expected in 2010.

"I made some plays. I messed up on some plays," the South Carolina junior cornerback said. "As a DB, you've got to learn from them and take it from there."

That's exactly what made Gilmore, who is on the 2011 Lott watch list, an all-conference player in his first two seasons.

Despite some struggles, the 6-1, 194-pound Gilmore was still named first-team All-SEC by the coaches in 2010 after leading the team with 79 tackles. Opposing quarterbacks didn't look his way nearly as much as they did his freshman season and his pass breakups fell from eight to just two.

However, he played on a defense that was torched for more than 300 yards passing in six of its 14 games.

Gilmore, who had three interceptions, struggled enough for his coaches to re-emphasize the fundamentals of coverage.

"Stephon got beat on a couple double moves and we've worked hard on (those during the spring)," cornerbacks coach Lorenzo Ward said. "The bottom line, any time you break on a route you break to the receiver and not the ball. He's learning that."

Ward also wants Gilmore to become more of a vocal leader.

"He's got to be more boisterous," Ward said. "Guys listen to him and they respect him because they respect his work ethic and they respect the way he plays. We've got to hear more of a voice from him."

Gilmore, who has started every game of his career and could be an early enrollee for the NFL Draft, knows there's only one way to become the type of cornerback he vowed to be when he signed with South Carolina as one of the state's best high school players in 2009.

"I just try to come out here every day and work hard," he said. "The things that I don't do well, I'm just trying to work on them and take it one day at a time.

"I can get better in everything — press coverage, off coverage. My game hasn't reached the top yet."

And just like a closer in baseball, he's already realized the mentality it takes to play defensive back in the SEC.

"Bad plays will happen," Gilmore said, "but you've just got to put it behind you and focus on the next play."

a below-average unit.

Last season, the Gamecocks ranked next to last in kick returns (20.4) and last in punt returns (3.4) in the SEC.

Bryce Sherman took back the most kicks last season, but he'll likely give up the duties to a host of newcomers.

Butler is also looking to replace standout Spencer Lanning, who handled punting and field-goal duties a year ago. He ranked in the top half of the league in both areas.

Jay Wooten came out of spring drills as the leader to kick field goals, but Joey Scribner-Howard and Adam Yates aren't far behind.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

After playing one of the nation's toughest schedules in the past few seasons, 2011 isn't any easier.

The Gamecocks open with a neutral-site game against East Carolina and face 10 teams coming off bowls.

It helps that South Carolina went 6-1 at Williams-Brice Stadium last season and gets a friendly home slate this year that includes Vanderbilt, Auburn, Kentucky, The Citadel and Clemson.

The road schedule is tricky; the Gamecocks play at Georgia in the second week of the season and face three straight road games: at Mississippi State, Tennessee and Arkansas — which could be the toughest game on the whole schedule.

It's never easy in the SEC, but at least there's no Alabama this year.

—Brad Senkiw

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	vs. East Carolina (Charlotte)	6-7
Sept. 10	at Georgia	6-7
Sept. 17	NAVY	9-4
Sept. 24	VANDERBILT	2-10
Oct. 1	AUBURN	14-0
Oct. 8	KENTUCKY	6-7
Oct. 15	at Mississippi State	9-4
Oct. 29	at Tennessee	6-7
Nov. 5	at Arkansas	10-3
Nov. 12	FLORIDA	8-5
Nov. 19	THE CITADEL	3-8
Nov. 26	CLEMSON	6-7

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim Chaney | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Justin Wilcox** | **STADIUM: Neyland Stadium: 102,037**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
6-7, 3-5 SEC (T-3rd, East)

COACH:
Derek Dooley — At Tennessee: 6-7, 1 year; overall: 23-27, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
13; 7 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Tyler Bray, RB Tauren Poole, WR Justin Hunter, WR Da'Rick Rogers, DT Malik Jackson, S Prentiss Waggner

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Vols should have a potent attack with quarterback Tyler Bray, who set a school freshman record for passing yards, airing it out to wideouts Justin Hunter and Da'Rick Rogers. Tailback Tauren Poole rushed for more than 1,000 yards behind a youthful offensive line.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Tennessee ranked last in the SEC last season in rushing and eighth in run defense — not a winning formula in this league. The Vols should be improved in the run game, but the run defense could be problematic again as none of the 2010 starting linebackers competed in the spring. The secondary is also a question mark.

KEY LOSSES:
TE Luke Stocker, WR Gerald Jones, WR Denarius Moore, LB Nick Reveiz, DE Gerald Williams

OVERVIEW:
Tennessee should be better on offense, but the defense is a concern. The Vols will count on a lot of newcomers to shore up the defensive line and secondary. UT faces a tough stretch in middle of the season with SEC games against Georgia, LSU, Alabama and South Carolina. Looks like another .500 team on Rocky Top.

Dooley Zeroes In On Better Days

When Derek Dooley was asked what he learned in his first year as head coach at Tennessee, you could have predicted the answer, given his quick wit and sense of humor.

"When they (officials) say the game is over," Dooley said, "there's a good chance it's not."

Dooley and Tennessee found out the hard way — twice. The Vols celebrated at the end of the LSU game, only to retake the field because the Vols had 13 men on defense. They then allowed the Tigers to score a game-winning touchdown on the last play.

In the Music City Bowl against North Carolina, the Tar Heels were allowed to stop the clock on a spike with one second left despite having 12 men on the field. The blown call by the officials resulted in a game-tying field goal. UNC won it overtime.

An 8-5 record looks a lot better than 6-7, but that's what Tennessee was saddled with — a third losing record in six seasons.

Dooley knew shortly after he replaced Lane Kiffin that he faced a monumental rebuilding job — so huge that another six-win season is a real possibility. Dooley has only nine seniors on the roster, five projected to start — and only one on offense.

"It was such a unique situation we walked into, I call last season Year Zero and this season Year One instead of Year Two," said Dooley, who was hired in January 2010, less than three weeks before Signing Day. "That's a coaching trick so the fans won't get tired of you too soon."

Despite limited talent and depth, Dooley tricked a few teams last season. But Tennessee didn't have the stamina to stay with the upper echelon. Against Oregon, Florida, LSU, Alabama and South Carolina, UT was outscored only 50-43 in the first half ... but by a whopping 124-35 in the second half.

The Vols have lost 20 games in the past three years — the most in a three-year period in school history. Dooley not only has to rebuild the roster, but rebuild some psyches.

"We have to re-center the team on the expectations of Tennessee," he said.

But how could you expect such a young team — 70 percent of the roster will be sophomores and freshmen — to compete for an East Division title?

"We have to make sure our sophomores of next year play like juniors and seniors," Dooley said.

OFFENSE

With the offense struggling a year ago, freshman Tyler Bray took over at quarterback in the ninth game, guided the Vols to a 4-1 record, passed for more than 300 yards in four games, and set a school record for a freshman with 1,849 yards.

You would think the quarterback position was in good hands. Not so fast.

Realizing the rail-thin 6-6 Bray was a gunslinger who made plays off instinct and not film study, Tennessee fed Bray more information in the spring.

"The better he understands what we are doing," Dooley said, "the more he can do and the more confident he will become. We're going to try to push him a lot more."

It didn't appear to work. Bray had a so-so spring, culminating in a horrific 5-for-30 passing day during the team's spring game. Bray admitted to some frustration but tried to shrug it off. Dooley didn't seem fazed, either.

"If Tyler had gone 27-for-30 for 300 (yards) I would have said, 'Yeah, we're doing good,'" Dooley said. "If he would

Tyler Bray
Photo by Grant Halverson/Getty Images

have gone 5-for-30 ... 'It's just the spring game; it doesn't matter."'

Maybe it mattered more to Matt Simms, who started the first eight games a year ago and outplayed Bray in the spring game. Simms was 6 of 13 for 93 yards with one touchdown via pass and run.

Yet, Dooley said Bray is the starter.

Tennessee hopes to improve on a run game that ranked last in the SEC and 105th in the nation (109.2 yards).

Tauren Poole, the only senior starter on offense, rushed for 1,034 yards last season but had too many gains of two or fewer yards.

Sophomore Rajion Neal had a solid spring, pushing Poole. Toney Williams, slowed by a hamstring in the spring and an ACL injury last year, averaged 5.3 yards on 10 spring-game carries.

UT lost two quality receivers in Denarius Moore and Gerald Jones, but it returns two talented wideouts — Justin Hunter, a 26-foot long jumper, and Da'Rick Rogers. Hunter averaged an eye-popping 25.9 yards per catch on 16 receptions, seven for touchdowns. The wiry 6-5 talent needs to get stronger.

Rogers caught only 11 passes but displayed his running ability by averaging 7.3 yards on 16 speed sweeps. He is a physical wideout who vastly improved his route running for a team that badly needs to develop depth at receiver.

Tennessee enters fall with 50 starts among its linemen. Center James Stone made Freshman All-American. Right tackle Ja'Wuan James made the SEC All-Freshman team. Another freshman, Zach Fulton, made five starts.

The veteran of the group is senior left tackle Dallas Thomas. For reinforcement, UT signed three touted offensive linemen and landed Notre Dame transfer Alex Bullard.

DEFENSE

Tennessee's defense, trying to adjust to a third defensive coordinator in three years and gutted by injuries and departures, ranked no better than eighth in the SEC in four major categories last year — scoring, total yards, rush yards and pass yards.

Justin Wilcox enters his second season as UT's defensive coordinator, hoping another year in his system will pay dividends.

Five teams scored at least 30 points on Tennessee last year, but none of the last five opponents scored 30 in regulation. Four were held to 14 or less.

"Schematically there's going to be total continuity," said Dooley, even though he fired defensive line coach Chuck Smith, hired Peter Sirmon to coach linebackers and moved linebackers coach Lance Thompson to the defensive line.

"Our defensive staff has worked well

Justin Hunter
Photo by Jim Brown-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tyler Bray*	So	Set the school record for freshman passing yards.	Matt Simms, Sr.
RB	Tauren Poole*	Sr.	Rushed for more than 1,000 yards; breaks long runs.	Rajion Neal, So.
FB	Channing Fugate*	So.	Physical blocker; nice hands; good runner.	Ben Bartholomew, Jr.
WR	Justin Hunter	So.	Great leaper averaged 25.9 yards on 16 catches.	Vincent Dallas, Fr.
WR	Da'Rick Rogers	So.	Strong runner after the catch is improving routes.	Zach Rogers, Jr.
TE	Mychal Rivera	Jr.	Good hands; nice blocker; could surprise.	Brendan Downs, Fr.
LT	Dallas Thomas*	Jr.	Started all 13 games at LT and is a solid run blocker.	Tiny Richardson, Fr.
LG	JerQuari Schofield	So.	The biggest man on OL is strong at run blocking.	Marcus Jackson, Fr.
C	James Stone*	So.	Freshman All-American; lefty snapper gone righty.	Alex Bullard, So.
RG	Zach Fulton*	So.	Made five starts as freshman; good size, feet; physical.	Darrin Gooch, Jr.
RT	Ja'Wuan James*	So.	Freshman All-SEC; great potential; star skills.	Marques Pair, Fr.
K	Michael Palardy	So.	Made 5 of 7 FGs in backup role, also kicks off.	Chip Rhome, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jacques Smith	So.	Freshman All-SEC team, good pass rusher.	Steven Fowlkes, Jr.
DT	Malik Jackson*	Sr.	USC transfer is UT's best d-lineman; moved from DE.	Corey Miller, So.
NT	Daniel Hood	So.	Moved from OL but is a natural DL; spring surprise.	Montori Hughes, Jr.
DE	Willie Bohannon	Jr.	Had productive spring; should be a strong pass rusher.	Marlon Walls, So.
LB	Herman Lathers*	Jr.	UT's best LB; was second on team with 75 tackles.	Greg King, Jr.
LB	Austin Johnson	Sr.	Converted fullback had 44 stops as backup in 2010.	John Propst, So.
LB	Daryl Vereen	Sr.	The former running back made plays during spring.	Raiques Crump, So.
CB	Marsalis Teague*	Jr.	Converted receiver; good athlete with cover skills.	Art Evans, Sr.
CB	Eric Gordon*	So.	No. 3 DB tackler last season but struggled in spring.	Anthony Anderson, Sr.
SS	Brent Brewer*	So.	Former pro baseball player; hardest hitter among DBs.	Dontavis Sapp, So.
FS	Prentiss Waggner*	Jr.	Had three picks for TDs last year; inconsistent tackler.	Rod Wilks, Jr.
P	Matt Darr	Fr.	Top-rated punter out of high school; powerful leg.	Michael Palardy, So.

*Returning Starter

VOLUNTEERS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Maurice Couch
The Vols are counting on Couch to contribute – and possibly start – immediately upon his arrival. And he appears to be talented enough to do it. A four-star defensive tackle, his seasoning came at Garden City C.C. (Kan.). Couch is an incredibly strong player who was rated as the ninth-best prospect in junior college.

A.J. Johnson
There are two primary reasons Johnson could get plenty of action this fall: Tennessee is not particularly strong at linebacker and Johnson physically is ready to contribute early. Johnson has tremendous size and great athleticism. He seems to fit perfectly into the Vols' plan of getting bigger linebackers on the field.

DeAnthony Arnett
Because Tennessee's offense was inconsistent at best in 2010, the Vols are looking for playmakers to emerge this fall. Arnett could help give them another one. In addition to having excellent speed and the ability to change direction, Arnett has great hands and can make even the most difficult catches look routine.

THE SLEEPER

Jordan Williams
Tennessee's defensive line is not expected to be particularly strong this fall, which means the Florida product might have a shot to find his way onto the field in 2011. Williams' upside is huge. He has a great frame, good speed and an excellent motor.

Committments	27
Average Stars	3.41
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	12
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	92
National Rank: 13	SEC: 6

2012 NEEDS: On defense, Tennessee's overall talent is nothing exceptional. Because of that, the Volunteers will be looking to improve things on that side of the ball. In particular, they want defensive linemen and lots of them. Right now, Tennessee is a little lacking up front and it has an eye on bigger and more athletic linemen as the program tries to move back toward the upper echelon of the SEC. How many tackles might the Vols sign? The word is six or more, which would be quite a haul. Linebacker is another area of great need.

by Keith Niebuhr, Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
DeAnthony Arnett	WR	6-0	167	●●●●	Saginaw, MI	Saginaw
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 12 wide receiver...Participated in U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Allan Carson	DT	6-0	327	●●	Oxford, AL	Oxford
Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic...Chose Tennessee over Illinois, Kentucky and Vanderbilt.						
Cameron Clear	OL	6-6	265	●●●●	Memphis, TN	Central
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Tennessee...Rated as the nation's No. 18 offensive tackle...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Justin Coleman	DB	5-11	175	●●●●	Brunswick, GA	Brunswick
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 20 cornerback...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
Maurice Couch	DT	6-2	305	●●●●	Garden City, KS	Garden City C.C.
Rated as the No. 9 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Recorded 45 tackles, 12 tackles for loss and three sacks in 2010.						
Mack Crowder	OL	6-4	270	●●●	Bristol, TN	Tennessee
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 14 offensive center...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
Vincent Dallas	ATH	6-0	180	●●●	Ellenwood, GA	Cedar Grove
Rated as the No. 37 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 35 athlete...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
Brendan Downs	TE	6-6	224	●●●	Bristol, TN	Tennessee
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 tight end...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
Christian Harris	LB	6-2	230	●●●	Woodstock, GA	Etowah High School
Rated as the No. 90 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Recorded 127 tackles, 22 tackles for loss, four sacks and two interceptions as a senior.						
Marcus Jackson	OL	6-2	315	●●●●	Vero Beach, FL	Vero Beach
Rated as the No. 41 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 15 offensive guard...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
A.J. Johnson	LB	6-3	226	●●●●	Gainesville, GA	Gainesville
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Georgia...Rated as the nation's No. 8 inside linebacker...Participated in Under Armour All-American Game.						
Kyler Kerbyson	OL	6-5	290	●●●	Knoxville, TN	Catholic
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 34 offensive tackle...Selected to compete in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Marlin Lane	RB	6-1	205	●●●●	Daytona Beach, FL	Mainland
Rated as the No. 38 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 23 running back...Participated in Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Izauea Lanier	ATH	6-1	190	●●●●	Scooba, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
Rated as the No. 16 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Earned JUCO All-America, all-conference and all-region honors in 2010.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Curt Maggitt	LB	6-3	195	●●●●	West Palm Beach, FL	Dwyer
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 31 prospect in Florida...Rated as the nation's No. 12 outside linebacker.						
Pat Martin	DB	5-11	196	●●●●	Greenville, SC	J. L. Mann
Rated as the No. 6 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 22 safety...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.						
Byron Moore	DB	6-1	205	●●●●	Wilmington, CA	Los Angeles Harbor C.C.
Rated as the No. 5 junior college prospect in the nation by Rivals.com...Originally signed with USC out of high school.						
Geraldo Orta	DB	6-0	180	●●●	Valdosta, GA	Lowndes
Rated as the No. 72 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 57 safety...Recorded 80 tackles and one interception as a senior.						
Alan Posey	OL	6-6	305	●●●	Athens, GA	Clarke Central
Rated as the No. 42 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 46 offensive tackle.						
Brian Randolph	DB	6-0	180	●●●	Marietta, GA	Kell
Rated as the No. 29 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 safety.						
Antonio Richardson	OL	6-6	310	●●●●	Nashville, TN	Pearl-Cohn
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Tennessee...Rated as the nation's No. 7 offensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Trevarris Saulsberry	DT	6-4	252	●●●	Gainesville, FL	Gainesville
Rated as the nation's No. 56 defensive tackle...Recorded 68 tackles, 12 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks as a senior.						
Tom Smith	RB	5-10	205	●●●	Apopka, FL	Apopka
Rated as the No. 58 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 29 running back.						
Tino Thomas	ATH	6-0	190	●●●	Memphis, TN	Melrose
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 56 athlete.						
Jordan Williams	DE	6-4	240	●●●	Gainesville, FL	Gainesville
Rated as the No. 80 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 42 stongside defensive end.						
Justin Worley	QB	6-4	196	●●●	Rock Hill, SC	Northwestern
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 pro-style quarterback...Participated in the Shine Bowl of the Carolinas...Enrolled at Tennessee in January.						
Devrin Young	RB	5-7	156	●●●	Knoxville, TN	Bearden
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Racked up 7,433 yards and 83 touchdowns during high school career.						

VOLUNTEERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
3	Zach Allen	DB	5-9	195	Jr.	Knoxville
36	Anthony Anderson	DB	5-11	185	Sr.	Knoxville
60	Carson Anderson	OL	6-1	280	Jr.	Florence, AL
65	Joseph Ayres	DL	6-3	263	So.	Knoxville
39	Ben Bartholomew	TE	6-2	251	Jr.	Nashville
86	Willie Bohannon	DL	6-2	251	Jr.	Mobile, AL
45	Austin Bolen	FB	5-11	206	Fr.	Knoxville
13	Nick Branum	DB	5-11	180	So.	Knoxville
8	Tyler Bray	QB	6-6	210	So.	Kingsburg, CA
17	Brent Brewer	DB	6-1	210	So.	Tyrone, GA
26	Derrick Brodus	P/PK	5-11	171	Fr.	Maryville
78	Alex Bullard	OL	6-2	309	So.	Franklin
50	J.R. Carr	DS	5-10	220	So.	Lomita, CA
27	Jacob Carter	WR	6-0	181	Fr.	Nashville
40	Chris Cates	WR	5-10	189	Jr.	Knoxville
87	Keensen Chambers	DL	6-5	250	So.	Greenville, SC
94	Greg Clark	DL	6-2	322	Fr.	Warner Robbins, GA
27	Justin Coleman	DB	5-10	185	Fr.	Brunswick, GA
19	Tyler Coombes	DB	6-0	185	Fr.	Leebanon
29	Dorian Cozart	TB	5-7	196	Fr.	Knoxville
57	Mack Crowder	OL	6-2	275	Fr.	Bristol
50	Raiques Crump	LB	6-1	220	So.	Birmingham, AL
6	Vincent Dallas	WR	5-11	185	Fr.	Ellenwood, GA
3	Matt Darr	P/PK	6-1	221	Fr.	Bakersfield, CA
33	LaDarius Denson	LB	6-0	241	Jr.	Port St. Lucie, FL
84	Brendan Downs	TE	6-5	237	Fr.	Bristol
5	Tyler Drummer	WR	6-1	165	So.	Powell
82	Cory Eichholtz	WR	5-8	184	Jr.	Knoxville
25	Art Evans	DB	5-11	175	Sr.	Lakeland, FL
38	C.J. Fleming	DB	5-10	180	Sr.	Richmond, VA
90	Steven Fowlkes	DL	6-5	250	Jr.	College Park, GA
46	Channing Fugate	FB	6-1	245	So.	Jackson, KY
72	Zach Fulton	OL	6-5	330	So.	Homewood, IL
68	Jacob Gilliam	OL	6-4	275	Fr.	Knoxville
73	Darin Gooch	OL	6-2	301	Jr.	Reno, NV
24	Eric Gordon	DB	5-9	185	So.	Nashville
47	Gregory Grieco	LB	5-10	219	Fr.	Knoxville
59	Nick Guess	DS	6-3	230	Sr.	Knoxville
76	Daniel Hood	DL	6-4	293	So.	Knoxville
93	Montori Hughes	DL	6-4	327	Jr.	Murfreesboro
11	Justin Hunter	WR	6-4	191	So.	Virginia Beach, VA
97	Malik Jackson	DL	6-5	270	Sr.	Van Nuys, CA
68	Marcus Jackson	OL	6-2	326	Fr.	Vero Beach, FL
43	Martaze Jackson	DL	6-2	231	Fr.	Demopolis, AL
70	Ja'Wuan James	OL	6-6	324	So.	Suwanee, GA
95	Arthur Jeffery	DL	6-3	305	So.	Sarasota, FL
39	Grant Jessen	LB	5-11	215	Jr.	Cordova
40	Austin Johnson	LB	6-2	235	Sr.	Hickory, NC
48	Greg King	LB	6-2	235	Jr.	Memphis
34	Herman Lathers	LB	6-0	220	Jr.	Baton Rouge, LA
99	Ben Martin	DL	6-4	250	Sr.	Cincinnati, OH
18	Myles McKee	QB	6-1	180	Fr.	Arden, NC
80	Corey Miller	DL	6-3	255	So.	Wellford, SC
85	Matt Milton	WR	6-5	210	So.	Mascoutah, IL
42	Nigel Mitchell-Thornton	LB	6-1	235	Jr.	Stone Mountain, GA
7	Nash Nance	QB	6-3	208	Fr.	Calhoun, GA
20	Rajion Neal	TB	5-11	205	So.	Tyrone, GA
35	Robert Nelson	LB	5-11	205	So.	Stone Mountain, GA
2	Naz Oliver	DB	5-10	177	So.	Jersey City, NJ
66	Marques Pair	OL	6-5	310	Fr.	Sumter, SC
17	Tyler Page	DB	6-3	193	Fr.	Candler, NC
1	Michael Palardy	P/PK	5-11	172	So.	Coral Springs, FL
78	Chase Phillips	OL	6-3	286	So.	Knoxville
28	Tauren Poole	TB	5-10	210	Sr.	Toccoa, GA
51	John Propst	LB	6-0	225	So.	Hoover, AL
9	Doak Raulston	QB	6-1	200	So.	Fort Worth, TX
30	Shane Reveiz	LB	5-10	215	Sr.	Farragut
63	Kevin Revis	OL	6-1	275	So.	Evensville
47	Chip Rhome	P/PK	6-2	197	Sr.	Christiana
81	Mychal Rivera	TE	6-3	254	Jr.	Valencia, CA
21	Da'Rick Rogers	WR	6-3	215	So.	Calhoun, GA
83	Zach Rogers	WR	6-0	175	Jr.	Nashville
41	Dontavis Sapp	DB	6-2	215	So.	Valdosta, GA
75	JerQuari Schofield	OL	6-6	333	So.	Aiken, SC
12	Matt Simms	QB	6-3	210	Sr.	Franklin Lakes, NJ
89	Brent Slusher	TE	6-4	249	Sr.	Pineville, KY
55	Jacques Smith	DL	6-2	245	So.	Ooltewah
64	James Stone	OL	6-3	308	So.	Nashville
53	Jake Storey	LB	5-10	204	Sr.	Titusville, FL
24	Deanthoine Summerhill	TB	5-9	199	Fr.	Tuscumbia, AL
43	Dakota Summers	TE	6-3	232	Fr.	Camden
98	Rae Sykes	DL	6-2	275	Sr.	Alcoa
10	Marsalis Teague	DB	5-10	177	Jr.	Paris
71	Dallas Thomas	OL	6-5	301	Jr.	Baton Rouge, LA
30	Jaron Toney	TB	5-10	180	Fr.	Alcoa
9	Daryl Vereen	LB	5-11	215	Sr.	Charlotte, NC
23	Prentiss Waggner	DB	6-2	181	Jr.	Clinton, LA
58	Marlon Walls	DL	6-2	281	So.	Olive Branch, MS
80	Dylan West	WR	6-1	181	Fr.	Oneida
22	Rod Wilks	DB	6-0	214	Jr.	Smyrna
19	DeMario Williams	WR	6-2	204	Jr.	Culleoka
33	Toney Williams	TB	6-0	220	So.	Alpharetta, GA
14	Justin Worley	QB	6-4	200	Fr.	Rock Hill, SC
26	Robert Yonce	DB	6-0	192	Jr.	Wytheville, VA

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
T. Bray	9	142.7	125	224	10	55.8	1849	18	80	205.4
M. Simms	11	129.3	113	195	5	57.9	1460	8	72	132.7

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
G. Jones	10	55	596	10.8	4	37	59.6
D. Moore	13	47	981	20.9	9	64	75.5
L. Stocker	13	39	417	10.7	2	32	32.1

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
T. Poole	13	204	1085	51	1034	5.1	11	59	79.5
R. Neal	10	46	211	14	197	4.3	0	40	19.7
D. Oku	13	42	184	10	174	4.1	1	44	13.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: N. Reveiz 108, H. Lathers 75, J. Jackson 69
Tackles for loss: M. Jackson 11, N. Reveiz 6, C. Walker 6
Sacks: M. Jackson 5, G. Williams 4.5, C. Walker 3
Interceptions: J. Jackson 5, P. Waggner 5, two tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

Safety **Janzen Jackson**, who made second-team All-SEC last year, is arguably the best player on UT's team. But he wasn't enrolled in school in the spring for personal reasons. He missed the week of bowl practice to undergo unspecified rehab treatment.

To return, he must be reinstated by the UT Student Judicial Board due to a dorm-room incident and get an academic waiver from the NCAA.

• **Melvin Goins**, a starting point guard on the basketball team, who helped the Vols reach the Elite Eight in 2010, played cornerback during the spring with mixed results. He's physical, but hadn't played since his early high school days.

At the end of spring, it was unknown if he would return in the fall.

• **Daniel Hood**, a Knoxville product who moved from offensive line to nose tackle during the spring, was given the Andy Spiva Award as the defensive surprise of the spring. Hood said he's a more natural defensive player but even he expressed surprise that he emerged from spring as the No. 1 nose tackle.

• Offensive lineman **Alex Bullard**, a transfer from Notre Dame, won the Harvey Robinson Award for the most surprising offensive player. Bullard transferred to get closer to home due to a family illness. He can play tackle and center.

• Cornerback **Justin Coleman**, one of six mid-term enrollees, batted down two fade pass attempts to **Justin Hunter** during the spring game, drawing praise from coach **Derek Dooley**. Wide receiver **Vincent Dallas**, offensive lineman **Marcus Jackson** and tight end **Brendan Downs** were other early enrollees who had strong spring showings. Jackson ran at No. 1 left guard.

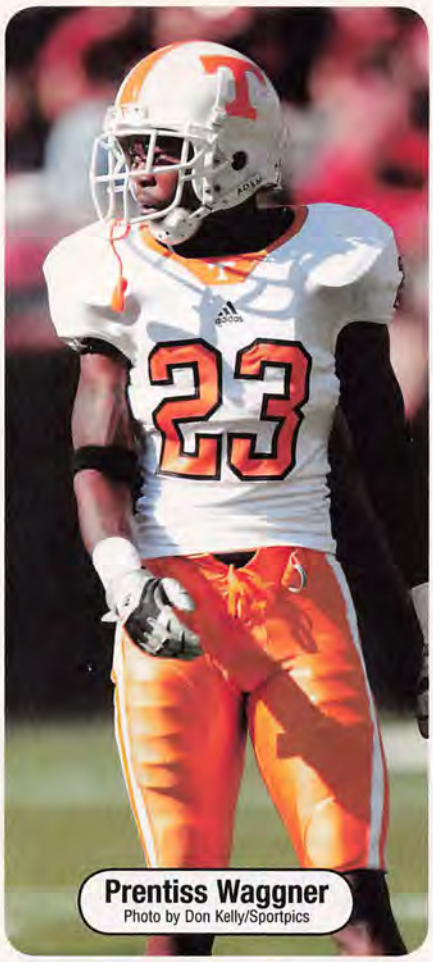
• At times last season, UT didn't feel comfortable using a nickel or dime package because coaches didn't think they had enough quality defensive backs. That should change this fall. UT had 11 scholarship defensive backs in the spring and signed seven more, including two from the junior college ranks.

• Among spring honors, physical toughness awards went to **Brent Brewer**, Dallas, **Zach Fulton** and **Jacques Smith**.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On the QBs:** "This may upset Tennessee people, but I'm not a big Tyler Bray believer. I know the guy came in and did some good things, but I don't think the guy is very good. He reaped a lot of benefits by beating below-average teams down the stretch. It will be interesting to see how he does this year, losing the receivers (Denarius Moore and Gerald Jones) he had because they were good players. The wide receivers are real talented but they are young. … I wouldn't be surprised if Tennessee is 6-6 again, even though they may be a little bit better."

• **On the defense:** "Defensively, they're missing a lot of parts. Other than Malik Jackson, Jacques Smith and Janzen Jackson there's not a kid better than what Vanderbilt is playing with right now."



Prentiss Waggner
Photo by Don Kelly/Sportpics

together. It's as fine of a staff as I've been a part of at any level."

Tennessee's first priority is stopping the run — four teams racked up at least 200 rushing yards. Last fall, UT lost two of its better defensive linemen to season-ending Achilles' injuries. One of those, end Ben Martin, tore his Achilles' again during winter workouts.

Malik Jackson, a transfer from USC, is light for a tackle at 275 pounds, but he is UT's best defensive lineman. End Jacques Smith broke a bone in his foot days before the spring game and was out until June.

Tackle Marlon Walls (Achilles' injury last year) worked some at end in the spring. Daniel Hood moved from offensive line to nose tackle and became a starter. End Willie Bohannon had a strong spring.

Another undersized tackle, Corey Miller (6-3, 255), played the three-technique during the spring. UT is hoping tackle Montori Hughes, the most imposing of the group (6-4, 327) will play to his potential.

The Vols need junior college defensive tackle Mo Couch to make an immediate impact.

Tennessee lost two starting linebackers, including team captain Nick Reveiz, and three more missed the spring game with injuries, making for an area of concern.

Dooley said inside-outside linebacker Austin Johnson was having a strong camp, but he suffered a sprained MCL one week before the spring game. Outside linebacker Herman Lathers (shoulder surgery) missed the spring. Greg King (knee last year) has a chance to be a quality player but must stay healthy. Daryl Vereen, a converted running back, came out of spring as a starter on the outside.

The secondary could be improved, but that depends on whether All-SEC safety Janzen Jackson, who missed the spring for personal reasons, returns. Safety Brent Brewer is a devastating hitter. Marsalis Teague had the best spring among cornerbacks. Safety-cornerback Prentiss Waggner had three interception returns for touchdowns.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Tennessee loses a veteran punter and kicker, but Dooley said he "saw some talent" from his two young specialists — punter-kicker Michael Palardy and punter Matt Darr. Palardy will kick and

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Tauren Poole

Poole is the main man to help Tennessee mount a running attack to take the heat off the passing game. ... In addition to cracking the 1,000-yard mark, he tied for the SEC lead with six 100-yard games. ... He hit the century mark against Oregon, LSU and Alabama; he was the first to hit the 100-yard mark against the Tide in 41 games. ... Led team with 12 touchdowns and 72 points. ... Had 16 plays of at least 20 yards.

EMERGING STAR

WR Da'Rick Rogers

By far UT's most physical receiver at 6-3, 215. ... Showed flashes of running ability by averaging 7.3 yards on 16 speed sweeps as a true freshman. ... Caught 11 passes for 167 yards (15.2 yards per catch) as he adapted to system and learned to read defenses. ... Showed dramatic improvement in route running during spring, averaging 24.9 yards per catch in back-to-back scrimmages. ... Last season averaged 24.8 yards on 12 kickoff returns with a long of 78 yards. He ranked fourth on team in all-purpose yards (582).

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Maurice Couch

The 6-2, 305-pounder from Garden City Community College was named a JC All-American after just one season at the Kansas school. ... Extremely strong with good quickness, Couch posted 45 tackles, including 12 for loss, and three sacks last season. ... As a high school senior in Orlando, racked up 110 tackles and 13 sacks. ... Redshirted his first year at Garden City and has three years of eligibility left. ... UT is counting on Couch to provide immediate help at a position of need.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	17.3	110
Rushing	122.9	88
Passing	145.8	107
Total	268.8	115
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	16.8	10
Rushing	103.1	12
Passing	160.4	4
Total	263.5	3
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.17	47

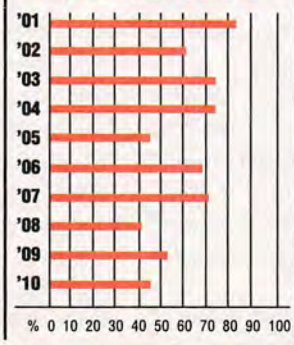
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.3	43
Rushing	157.2	54
Passing	226.3	46
Total	383.5	60
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.2	38
Rushing	149.5	65
Passing	169.2	12
Total	318.8	22
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 3	+ 0.23	47

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	27.0	58
Rushing	109.2	105
Passing	254.5	30
Total	363.8	75
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.1	56
Rushing	152.5	60
Passing	229.6	81
Total	382.2	69
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	36

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

6-7, 3-5

W	TENNESSEE-MARTIN	50-0
L	OREGON	13-48
L	FLORIDA	17-31
W	UAB (OT)	32-29
L	at LSU	14-16
L	at Georgia	14-41
L	ALABAMA	10-41
L	at South Carolina	24-38
W	at Memphis	50-14
W	OLE MISS	52-14
W	at Vanderbilt	24-10
W	KENTUCKY	24-14
	Music City Bowl	
L	vs. North Carolina (OT)	27-30

PLAYER PROFILE

Tauren Poole
Photo by Grant Halverson/Getty Images

From 'Just OK' to 2K? OL Sets Goal for Poole

Two years ago, tailback Tauren Poole consistently broke long runs and dodged defenders in scrimmages, but he couldn't get on the field when it counted.

Tennessee pegged Montario Hardesty as the starter. No complaints. He rushed for 1,345 yards and was drafted in the second round. But Bryce Brown, a top-rated running back from Kansas, jumped Poole on the depth chart, although his scrimmage numbers didn't outdo Poole.

So Poole waited, trying to be patient in 2009.

When Brown bolted for Kansas State before the 2010 season, Poole seized his chance. The 5-10, 210-pound junior darted for 1,034 yards last season, leading the team in rushing by more than 800 yards. He averaged 5.1 yards per carry, tacked on 11 touchdowns and caught 22 passes.

Even though Poole was working behind a young offensive line, his numbers could have been better. He was adept at breaking 20-yard runs, but he had far too many gains of two or fewer yards. He didn't provide the consistency his head coach desired. So Poole rededicated himself in the spring to improve.

"Coach always harps on us being patient as runners and hitting the hole hard," Poole said. "It's hard for me to be patient because I want to hit it so fast. It's hard to break old habits, but it'll make me better."

Despite Poole's production, Tennessee coach Derek Dooley wasn't euphoric in his praise — he expects more.

"Runners make the offensive line," Dooley said. "I've never seen a great back not make yards in all my history. Great backs make yards. They make guys miss in space and they power through guys."

Poole agreed.

"He's exactly right," Poole said. "I'm learning to let it go and let loose. A lot of times, I didn't do that last year. I was running here and there and everywhere, and not getting any yardage."

Poole didn't always believe the green group ahead of him would provide a hole.

"This year I know it'll be different because they've told me to trust them," Poole said.

The offensive linemen trust Poole enough to predict the once-ignored tailback could have a 2,000-yard season — quite a goal for an offense that ranked last in the SEC in rushing.

Poole shrugs at the thought of an eye-popping total.

"If 2,000 yards is going to win us games," Poole said, "it'd be great. But if 2,000 isn't going to win us games, I don't want anything to do with it."

kickoff and might punt, if Darr stumbles.

A fill-in last year, Palardy was 5 of 7 on field goal attempts, his only misses from outside 40 yards. Darr, ranked the nation's No. 1 punter in high school, has a strong leg but has been inconsistent.

UT's punt return game was pathetic last year, No. 109 in the nation (4.1 yards). Due to muffed punts, Dooley at times didn't have anyone back or told returners to fair catch.

On kick returns, Eric Gordon and Da'Rick Rogers averaged more than 23 yards per return.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

In a controversial move, Tennessee bought out a game at North Carolina and added Buffalo. The Vols were trying to soften the schedule, given the exodus of more than 30 players with the firing of Phillip Fulmer and departure of Lane Kiffin.

UT's non-conference schedule has Montana, Buffalo, Cincinnati and Middle Tennessee State — not exactly murderer's row. Eight opponents — seven from the SEC — went to a bowl game.

While the non-conference schedule is weak, the SEC slate is a gauntlet — no league team has a tougher task. UT has consecutive games against Georgia, LSU, Alabama and South Carolina. And the Vols play what many think will be the top three teams in the West — Alabama, Arkansas and LSU. Florida, Alabama and Arkansas are on the road.

— Jimmy Hyams

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	MONTANA	7-4
Sept. 10	CINCINNATI	4-8
Sept. 17	at Florida	8-5
Oct. 1	BUFFALO	2-10
Oct. 8	GEORGIA	6-7
Oct. 15	LSU	11-2
Oct. 22	at Alabama	10-3
Oct. 29	SOUTH CAROLINA	9-5
Nov. 5	MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE	6-7
Nov. 12	at Arkansas	10-3
Nov. 19	VANDERBILT	2-10
Nov. 26	at Kentucky	6-7

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For more coverage of the Commodores, visit vanderbilt.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Donovan | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Bob Shoop** | **STADIUM: Vanderbilt Stadium: 39,790**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
2-10, 1-7 SEC (6th, East)

COACH:
James Franklin — At Vanderbilt and overall: first year

RETURNING STARTERS:
21; 11 offense, 8 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
DE Tim Fugger, CB Casey Hayward, WR Jordan Matthews, RB Warren Norman, LB Chris Marve, SS Sean Richardson, RB Zac Stacy, QB Larry Smith

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The defensive line has depth, especially with T.J. Greenstone, Walker May and Rob Lohr returning from injuries that kept them out of the spring. Hayward had six picks last year as he continues to develop into a shutdown cornerback. Offensively, the backfield is crowded, with Norman expected to get most of the carries coming off wrist and knee surgeries.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Just nine offensive linemen played in the spring game, so depth questions will linger. Though QB Smith is penciled in as the starter, the position could be a work in progress as he is the team's only passer with Division I experience. The Commodores have to replace two starters at linebacker.

KEY LOSSES:
DE Theron Kadri, LB Nate Campbell, LB John Stokes, CB Jamie Graham, S Jay Fullam

OVERVIEW:
The Commodores aren't low on game experience. Still, Vanderbilt has been to just one bowl game in the last 28 years and the road isn't any easier this year with away games at Alabama, Florida and South Carolina. But the program can only go up. With a new, young, coaching staff, optimism is as high as it has been in recent years.

Franklin Brings the Energy, Hopes Wins Will Follow

After interviewing for the vacant head coaching job at Vanderbilt last December, James Franklin didn't waste any time.

The school hadn't offered him the job yet ... but that didn't concern Franklin.

"I was coming. Me and my wife, we started packing the day we left here," Franklin said. "There was that type of commitment from Day One. Really, I was confident all along."

It will take that sort of determination and confidence for Franklin to turn around Vanderbilt. Most of Franklin's predecessors have failed, evidenced by the fact the Commodores have played in just one bowl game in the past 28 years.

But Franklin, who replaces Robbie Caldwell — now the offensive line coach at Clemson — appears to possess the energy and enthusiasm required. He spent more than 15 years bouncing around as an assistant in college and the pros.

He was Maryland's offensive coordinator for the past three years and was named the school's coach-in-waiting in 2009. But with a new athletic director, that title had lost some clout and, indeed, shortly after Franklin left for Vanderbilt, Maryland coach Ralph Friedgen was forced out.

It hasn't taken long for Franklin's personality to shine. The 39-year-old is involved and hands-on with his players, at practices and in the community.

"Although I am young guy, I feel like I have an old-school mentality," Franklin said. "So I have a hard time not coming out here, going full speed and flying around."

He compiled a coaching staff that reflects his philosophy — and age. The average age of his nine offensive and defensive coaches is 38.

But that youth and passion is welcome.

"They have brought in a new charisma and a new enthusiasm that we haven't seen before," linebacker Chris Marve said.

Vanderbilt trails other SEC programs in terms of talent, facilities, depth and tradition. But that hasn't stopped Franklin from dreaming big — "I'm not a 6-5 guy. ... Everything we will be about is championships," he said.

After one spring, that mindset hasn't changed.

"Talking to our kids, they say we are a better football team right now than we were at any point last year," Franklin said. "Whether that is true or not, they believe that and that is important. ... From talking to people, we are much further ahead at this point than we were last year. I just want to build on that."

OFFENSE

Larry Smith is the frontrunner at quarterback heading into the summer. But the competition could get crowded with Jordan Rodgers returning from surgery and three incoming freshmen in the mix.

Talented dual-threat Lafonte Thourogood headlines that group. The 6-2, 225-pounder amassed nearly 2,000 total yards and 27 touchdowns as a senior in Virginia Beach, Va. He was a late, surprise addition for Vanderbilt, switching from Virginia Tech on signing day.

Smith is 4-15 as a starter in the past two years, struggling with accuracy and especially with moving the chains. He has just 11 career passing touchdowns, compared to 13 interceptions.

Rodgers, the brother of Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, was expected to challenge Smith this spring. But Rodgers, a junior college transfer who redshirted last season due to a shoulder

Larry Smith
Photo by Michael Marti

injury, was limited to drills only.

"Obviously the fact that he hasn't been able to have any live reps and Larry has, that gives Larry an advantage, there is no doubt about it," Franklin said. "I want to make the most competitive environment we possibly can with the freshmen that are coming in and give (Rodgers) an opportunity to compete with Larry and the other guys for the starting job."

The backfield will be crowded. Leading rusher Warren Norman is back after knee and wrist injuries that required surgery. He was named the SEC Freshman of the Year in 2009 and, at 5-10, 200 pounds, is explosive in the open field, which is why he also returns kickoffs.

Zac Stacy gives the Commodores another weapon, with similar size and speed to Norman. He also has the ability to break the big run. He had three touchdowns of 30 yards or more last year, including a 67-yarder.

Wesley Tate provides a physical, bruising presence. As a redshirt freshman in 2010, he filled in when Norman and Stacy went down with injuries.

"When you got a guy that is one of your faster players on your team and he is 235 pounds — he is what everybody is looking for," Franklin said.

At wide receiver, 6-3 sophomore Jordan Matthews is emerging as a playmaker. He enjoyed a very productive spring after ending 2010 with a team-high four touchdown catches in his last four games. Tight end Brandon Barden is another weapon, catching three touchdown passes to go along with a team-high 425 yards.

Offensive line might be a problem once again. All five starters return to a unit that allowed 36 sacks, the second most in the SEC. Due to injuries, just nine linemen participated in the spring game and depth could be an issue in the fall.

DEFENSE

T.J. Greenstone and Tim Fugger return as starters on the defensive line. Greenstone, a co-captain last year, was one of the many linemen, along with Rob Lohr, Walker May and Thad McHaney, who wore red injury jerseys in the spring. At defensive tackle, Greenstone is the leader of the line — a unit that has potential rising stars in Colt Nichter (tackle), Johnell Thomas (end) and Kyle Woestmann (end).

With a depleted line in spring practices, Fugger was the constant. In 2010, he had three sacks and forced four fumbles — tied for seventh most in the country.

"He is disruptive," said defensive coordinator Bob Shoop, who will run a 4-3 base defense. "He has really had to be the glue that holds that group together up front and he has done an outstanding job."

At linebacker, Chris Marve is the

Casey Hayward
Photo by Michael Marti

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Larry Smith*	Sr.	Has a 4-15 record as a two-year starter.	Jordan Rodgers, Jr.
RB	Warren Norman*	Jr.	Versatile RB/returner sat out spring (knee, wrist).	Wesley Tate, So.
RB	Zac Stacy	Jr.	Second in rushing behind Norman the past two years.	Micah Powell, Jr.
WR	Udom Umoh*	Sr.	Good blocker needs to emerge as receiving threat.	Jonathan Krause, So.*
WR	Jordan Matthews	So.	Had four TD catches in last four games in '10.	John Cole, Jr.*
TE	Brandon Barden*	Sr.	Led team with 34 catches and 425 receiving yards.	Austin Monahan, Sr.
LT	Wesley Johnson*	So.	Earned Freshman All-SEC, All-America honors in '10.	Andrew Bridges, Fr.
LG	Jabo Burrow*	Jr.	Versatile lineman played at center in spring.	Caleb Welchans, Jr.
C	Logan Stewart*	So.	Started last six games as freshman.	Jabo Burrow, Jr.
RG	Kyle Fischer*	Sr.	Team's biggest lineman at 6-6, 310 pounds.	Mylon Brown, So.
RT	Ryan Seymour*	Jr.	After solid freshman season in 2009, made 10 starts.	Chase White, Fr.
K	Ryan Fowler*	Jr.	Missed all four attempts beyond 35 yards last year.	Carey Spear, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Tim Fugger*	Sr.	Four forced fumbles tied for seventh-most in country.	Johnell Thomas, Jr.
DT	Colt Nichter	Jr.	Aggressive player; four starts in '10; had three sacks.	Rob Lohr, Jr.*
DT	T.J. Greenstone*	Sr.	Co-captain missed most of the spring due to leg injury.	Jared Morse, So.
DE	Walker May	So.	Good rusher off the edge; was limited in the spring.	Kyle Woestmann, Fr.
LB	Archibald Barnes	Jr.	Just one start in '10, but played in all 12 games.	Blake Gowder, Fr.
LB	Chris Marve*	Sr.	Defensive leader; very physical; has 306 career tackles.	Dexter Daniels, Jr.
LB	Chase Garnham	So.	Has a team-high eight tackles in the spring game.	Tristan Strong, Jr.
CB	Casey Hayward*	Sr.	Intercepted six passes in '10, second most in the SEC.	Andre Hal, So.
CB	Trey Wilson	Jr.	Just one career start; emerged after productive spring.	Eddie Foster, Jr.*
SS	Sean Richardson*	Sr.	Team-high last year with 98 tackles, including 67 solo.	Eric Samuels, Jr.
FS	Kenny Ladler*	So.	Freshman All-SEC selection made nine starts.	Javon Marshall, So.
P	Richard Kent*	Jr.	His 84 punts were a school record last year.	Ryan Fowler, Jr.

*Returning Starter

COMMODORES RECRUITING 2011 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Jake Bernstein
With Vanderbilt being somewhat thin on the offensive line, Bernstein will have a great opportunity to contribute in 2011. A three-star recruit who projects as a guard, he already is physically ready for the next level. How he picks things up will determine how much action he gets.

Joshua Grady
Arguably the most athletic member of the Vanderbilt recruiting class, Grady is a talented player from Florida who will begin his career at quarterback but is versatile enough to play either receiver or defensive back if needed. The Commodores will want the ball in his hands often because of his playmaking ability.

Larry Franklin
Another recruit from Florida, Franklin is a talented player with a great body for a defensive back. He could either be a big safety or possibly even a linebacker, where he would provide a good deal of speed. The truth is, Franklin is athletic enough to play this fall at either spot.

THE SLEEPER

Jimmy Stewart
Originally committed to Maryland, Stewart was a nice pickup for the Commodores because he can provide them with more speed on the edge. Still somewhat raw, he can play either linebacker or defensive end as he has the frame to do either. Though only a two-star recruit, Stewart has a high ceiling.

Committments	21
Average Stars	2.71
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	6
Total Stars	57
National Rank: NR	SEC: 12

2012 NEEDS: For Vanderbilt, one major focus is on improving up front. With that in mind, the Commodores hope to land several interior linemen. On the offensive line, only one projected starter is a senior, but overall there isn't much depth. That means there is a chance for 2012 signees to see meaningful action as freshmen. On defense, Vanderbilt also has a great need on the interior. On both sides of the football, the Commodores are hoping to land bigger, more athletic players that will help them compete better in the rugged SEC.

by Keith Niebuhr/rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jake Bernstein	OL	6-4	275	●●●	Crystal Lake, IL	Crystal Lake South
Rated as the No. 29 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com…Participated in NUC All-World Gridiron Classic…Helped lead team to first undefeated regular season in school history as a senior.						
Darien Bryant	TE	6-4	215	●●●	Pickerington, OH	Pickerington North
Rated as the No. 47 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 30 tight end…Caught 18 passes for 248 yards and one touchdown as a senior.						
Barron Dixon	DE	6-4	270	●●●	Alpharetta, GA	Chattahoochee
Rated as the No. 85 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com…Recorded 76 tackles and three sacks as a senior…Participated in NUC All-World Gridiron Classic.						
Larry Franklin	DB	6-0	200	●●●	Vero Beach, FL	Vero Beach
Rated as the nation's No. 58 safety by Rivals.com…Recorded 78 tackles and two interceptions as a senior…Chose Vanderbilt over Connecticut, Maryland, Memphis, Michigan State and Wisconsin.						
Joshua Grady	ATH	6-1	192	●●●	Seffner, FL	Armwood
Rated as the No. 86 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 45 athlete…Completed 182 of 256 passes for 2,106 yards and 24 touchdowns, while rushing for 865 yards and 14 scores as a senior.						
Conor Hart	DE	6-4	250	●●	Detroit, MI	Brother Rice
Two-year starter at defensive end…Had 62 tackles and 7.5 sacks as a senior…Chose Vanderbilt over Bowling Green, Colorado State, Miami (Ohio) and Syracuse.						
Mitchell Hester	RB	5-8	174	●●	Neptune Beach, FL	Fletcher
Rushed for more than 4,000 yards during high school career…Son of former Florida State All-American linebacker and Miami Dolphin Ron Hester…Chose Vanderbilt over Iowa State, Maryland, Rutgers, South Florida, Central Florida and Virginia.						
Kris Kentera	QB	6-4	195	●●	Colorado Springs, CO	Pine Creek
Passed for 1,650 yards and 16 touchdowns while rushing for 649 yards and seven TDs as a senior…First-team all-state selection…Chose Vanderbilt over Colorado, Colorado State and Montana.						
Derek King	ATH	5-10	185	●●●	Brentwood, TN	Brentwood Academy
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com…Three-year starter at defensive back and one year at running back…Had 28 tackles, eight pass breakups and one interception as a senior.						
Jacquese Kirk	DB	5-11	160	●●●	Jasper, AL	Walker
Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 55 cornerback…Participated in Alabama-Mississippi All-Star Classic…Had 44 tackles and two interceptions as a senior.						
James Lewis	OL	6-5	295	●●●	Arlington, TN	Arlington
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com…Participated in Tennessee East-West All-Star Game…Participated in inaugural NUC All-World Gridiron Classic.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jahmel McIntosh	DB	6-1	190	●●●	Cleveland, MS	Cleveland
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Mississippi by Rivals.com…First-team all-state selection…Had 56 solo tackles, four interceptions and six pass breakups as a senior…Participated in Mississippi North-South All-Star Game.						
Spencer Pulley	OL	6-5	277	●●●	Cordova, TN	Evangelical Christian School
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com…Three-year starter…Chose Vanderbilt over Memphis, Georgia Tech, Mississippi State, Navy, Southern Miss and Arkansas State.						
Steven Scheu	TE	6-6	240	●●●	Evansville, IN	Evansville Reitz Memorial
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com…Caught 33 passes for 378 yards and five touchdowns as a senior…Chose Vanderbilt over Kansas, Miami (Ohio) and Western Michigan.						
Jerron Seymour	RB	5-8	185	●●●	Hialeah, FL	Hialeah
Finished career with 4,207 rushing yards and 61 rushing touchdowns…Two-time first-team All-Dade County at running back.						
Jimmy Stewart	LB	6-4	220	●●	Cape Coral, FL	Island Coast
Recorded 40 tackles and 13 sacks as a senior…Had 45 tackles and eight sacks as a junior…Chose Vanderbilt over Maryland, Minnesota, Utah Sate and Colorado State.						
Lafonte Thourogood	QB	6-2	225	●●●	Virginia Beach, VA	Ocean Lakes
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Virginia by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 25 dual-threat quarterback…Accounted for nearly 2,000 yards as a senior despite missing time due to injury.						
Joe Townsend	DT	6-4	275	●●	Hendersonville, TN	Hendersonville
Recorded more than 100 tackles with seven sacks as a senior…Participated in Tennessee East-West All-Star Game…Chose Vanderbilt over MTSU, Tulane and Arkansas State.						
Jose Valedon	OL	6-4	278	●●●	Oak Ridge, TN	Oak Ridge
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com…Played all three offensive line positions during career…Participated in Tennessee East-West All-Star Game.						
Dillon van der Wal	TE	6-7	230	●●●	Westlake Village, CA	Oaks Christian
Rated as the No. 47 prospect in California by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 23 tight end…Also played defensive end in high school and racked up 64 solo tackles with 22 sacks as a senior.						
Andrew Williamson	DB	6-2	190	●●	San Antonio, TX	John Paul Stevens
Recorded 168 tackles and one interception as a senior…Chose Vanderbilt over Air Force, Baylor, Navy, Northwestern and Wake Forest.						

COMMODORES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
41	Nick Aguirre	DB	5-11	190	Fr.	Mobile, AL
49	Robby Barbieri	LB	6-1	210	Fr.	Eden Prairie, MN
6	Brandon Barden	TE	6-5	245	Sr.	Lincolnton, GA
15	Archibald Barnes	LB	6-4	228	Jr.	Tampa, FL
43	Korrie Barnes	DB	5-9	165	Fr.	Knoxville
80	Chris Boyd	WR	6-4	200	Fr.	Roswell, GA
52	Andrew Bridges	OT	6-6	265	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
88	Brady Brown	WR	6-4	210	So.	Argyle, TX
50	Mylon Brown	OL	6-5	310	So.	Trilby, FL
57	Jabo Burrow	OG	6-4	290	Jr.	Morris, AL
28	Karl Butler	DB	6-1	205	So.	New Orleans, LA
12	Steven Clarke	DB	5-10	190	So.	Lauderdale Lakes, FL
83	John Cole	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Somerset, KY
18	Dexter Daniels	DE	6-1	230	Jr.	Brantley, AL
3	Akeem Dunham	WR	6-3	210	Jr.	Eustis, FL
34	Andrew East	SN/LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Indianpolis, IN
72	Kyle Fischer	OG/OT	6-6	310	Sr.	Columbia, SC
26	Reggie Ford	DB	5-8	170	So.	Nashville
16	Eddie Foster	DB	5-10	175	Jr.	Colleyville, TX
48	Ryan Fowler	PK	5-10	170	Jr.	Taylors, SC
51	Eric Frieman	PK	5-9.5	170	So.	Scarsdale, NY
42	Tim Fugger	DE	6-4	255	Sr.	Oak Brook, IL
36	Chase Garnham	LB	6-3	225	So.	Fairhope, AL
43	Jeff Gendelman	WR	6-3	190	Fr.	Purchase, NY
7	Charlie Goro	QB	6-2	205	So.	Park Ridge, IL
26	Blake Gowder	HB	6-2	225	Fr.	Blairsville, GA
74	T.J. Greenstone	DT	6-3	285	Sr.	Lawrenceville, GA
84	Daniel Hagaman	WR	6-2	195	Fr.	Brentwood
23	Andre Hal	DB	6-0	185	So.	Port Allen, LA
19	Casey Hayward	DB	6-0	185	Sr.	Perry, GA
93	Josh Jelesky	DT	6-5	260	Jr.	Naperville, IL
16	Bobby Jewell	LB	6-0	225	Jr.	Brentwood
67	Wesley Johnson	OT	6-5	280	So.	Nashville
85	Mason Johnston	TE	6-4	245	So.	Jacksonville, FL
47	DeAndre Jones	LB	6-1	235	Jr.	Memphis
94	Richard Kent	P	6-2	195	Jr.	Marietta, GA
56	James Kittredge	DL	6-4	270	So.	Ramsey, NJ
17	Jonathan Krause	WR	5-11	180	So.	Snellville, GA
1	Kenny Ladler	S	6-1	205	So.	Stone Mountain, GA
38	Fitz Lassing	TE/FB	6-3	235	So.	Nashville
27	Jarron Lewis	DB	6-0	180	Fr.	Atascocita, TX
54	Taylor Loftley	DT	6-2	285	Jr.	Chamblee, GA
84	Rob Lohr	DT	6-4	288	Jr.	Phoenixville, PA
31	Javon Marshall	DB	5-10	195	So.	Huber Heights, OH
13	Chris Marve	LB	6-0	235	Sr.	Memphis
87	Jordan Matthews	WR	6-3	200	So.	Madison, AL
90	Walker May	DE	6-5	235	So.	Birmingham, AL
99	Thad McHaney	DE	6-5	245	So.	Nashville
86	Austin Monahan	TE	6-6	255	Sr.	Charlotte, NC
97	Jared Morse	DL	6-2	270	So.	Oxford, AL
58	Colt Nichter	DT	6-2	290	Jr.	Park City, UT
5	Warren Norman	RB/KR	5-10	200	Jr.	Stone Mountain, GA
37	Al Owens	LB	6-2	215	Jr.	Springtown, TX
45	Marc Panu	FB	6-2	245	So.	Mableton, GA
20	Micah Powell	RB	6-0	215	Jr.	Tarpon Springs, FL
9	Trent Pruitt	WR	5-10	180	Fr.	Fitzgerald, GA
75	Grant Ramsay	OL	6-5	285	Fr.	Marietta, GA
21	Sean Richardson	S	6-2	215	Sr.	Linden, AL
11	Jordan Rodgers	QB	6-2	210	Jr.	Chico, CA
96	Thomas Ryan	DL	6-3	240	Fr.	Marathon, FL
82	Jameson Sackey	WR	6-1	210	Jr.	Smyrna, GA
22	Eric Samuels	DB	6-0	200	Jr.	Eustis, FL
62	Ryan Seymour	OT	6-4	305	Jr.	Kingsland, GA
25	Andre Simmons	S	6-0	205	So.	Lofton, VA
10	Larry Smith	QB	6-2	220	Sr.	Prattville, AL
35	Blake Southerland	FB	6-2	235	So.	Lawrenceville, GA
39	Carey Spear	PK	5-10	185	So.	Mayfield Village, OH
2	Zac Stacy	RB	5-9	210	Jr.	Centreville, AL
60	Logan Stewart	C/OG	6-4	290	So.	Boiling Springs, SC
29	Tristan Strong	LB	6-1	235	Jr.	Loganville, GA
41	Patrick Sutton	LB	6-0	210	Fr.	Mt. Pleasant, SC
24	Wesley Tate	RB	6-2	235	So.	Hendersonville
53	Vince Taylor	DT	6-2	288	Fr.	Hattiesburg, MS
98	Johnell Thomas	DE	6-0	250	Jr.	Orlando, FL
19	John Townsley	QB	6-4	200	So.	Upper Arlington, OH
4	Udom Umoh	WR	6-0	185	Sr.	Fort Valley, GA
17	Jarrett Wadler	DB	5-9	165	Fr.	Houston, TX
78	Caleb Welchans	OT	6-5	300	Jr.	Wildwood, MO
73	Chase White	OL	6-5	280	Fr.	Plano, TX
8	Trey Wilson	DB	6-0	190	Jr.	Shreveport, LA
92	Kyle Woestmann	DE	6-3	245	Fr.	Marietta, GA

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

Name	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
L. Smith	11	94.3	117	247	5	47.4	1262	6	65	114.7
J. Funk	8	102.0	52	109	6	47.7	651	5	57	81.4

RECEIVING

Name	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
B. Barden	12	34	425	12.5	3	43	35.4
J. Cole	12	25	317	12.7	1	57	26.4
J. Krause	12	24	243	10.1	0	52	20.2

RUSHING

Name	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
W. Norman	8	77	482	23	459	6.0	4	80	57.4
Z. Stacy	9	66	355	24	331	5.0	3	67	36.8
K. Reeves	11	76	335	29	306	4.0	0	31	27.8

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: S. Richardson 98, C. Marve 80, J. Stokes 78
Tackles for loss: C. Marve 8, R. Lohr 8, S. Richardson 7
Sacks: R. Lohr 4, C. Nichter 3, C. Marve 2.5
Interceptions: C. Hayward 6, K. Ladler 1, E. Foster 1, K. Butler 1

NOTEBOOK

Quarterback **Jordan Rodgers** is the younger brother of Super Bowl-winning quarterback Aaron Rodgers, and he's also friends with one of the Packers' biggest rivals.

Shortly after Jordan arrived on campus, former Commodore star and current Chicago Bears quarterback Jay Cutler, who was working out at Vanderbilt at the time, took Jordan under his wing and showed him around Nashville, forming a friendship.

That made last year's NFC Championship Game between the Packers and Bears tough.

"This week is all about my brother," Jordan said at the time.

Vanderbilt has more ties to the NFL: Running back **Wesley Tate**'s brother, Golden, is a former Notre Dame standout who plays wide receiver for the Seattle Seahawks.

• Though the offense mirrors a West Coast style, even the players don't know what to expect in the fall.

Head coach **James Franklin** and offensive coordinator **John Donovan** made changes throughout the spring, having quarterback **Larry Smith** work out of the shotgun, behind center, with two or three or four wide receiver sets.

"Honestly, I have no idea," wide receiver **Jordan Matthews** said. "I like that. That way you can expect anything. ... Come fall, all that will be out there on the field for everyone to see."

• Franklin is Vanderbilt's second African-American head coach. D'Andre Hill-Montgomery became the school's first when she was selected the women's track and field coach in 2007.

• Offensive line coach **Herb Hand** was the only carryover from Robbie Caldwell's staff. Hand is in just his second year at Vanderbilt after serving as Tulsa's offensive coordinator and offensive line coach for three years.

• One reason why the offensive line is low on depth is because redshirt sophomore guard/center **James Kittredge** is not enrolled after violating university rules. He could return in spring of 2012.

• Besides Hand, only defensive backs coach **Wesley McGriff** has coached in the SEC. McGriff coached the running backs and cornerbacks at Kentucky from 2001-02. He spent the past three years at Miami and was the defensive backs coach at Kansas State in 2007 for one month when Franklin was the offensive coordinator for the Wildcats.

OPPOSING COACHES VIEW

• **On this season:** "Vanderbilt had a pretty good run of talent for a few years, but they don't have many guys returning that are real good. I don't expect them to be very good."

• **On former coach Bobby Johnson:** "Bobby Johnson and that staff honestly was maybe the best group of coaches in the league. I thought they were phenomenal getting what they got out of that group of guys. They were a tough team to beat because they were good at scheming you, taking away what you did well and making adjustments during games."

• **More on Johnson's teams:** "You didn't look forward to playing them. They'd knock a knot on everybody's head at some point in time. They may not have won on the scoreboard, but they made it hard."

Warren Norman
Photo by Michael Marti

unit's only returning starter. Marve, like Greenstone, is one of the leaders of the defense. At 6-0, 235 pounds, the middle linebacker swarms to the ball, getting involved in almost every play. Archibald Barnes, Chase Garnham and Tristan Strong will try to emerge on the edges.

"I have been impressed with the group," Franklin said.

He cautioned that he might use more nickel and dime packages to get extra speed on the field.

"It doesn't make sense (to be in a base defense) if your fifth and sixth DBs are better than your second, third or fourth linebacker," he said. "Let's get our best guys on the field and put them in a position to be successful."

After seniors Casey Hayward and Sean Richardson, the secondary is youthful. Five true freshmen played in 2010 as the secondary was burned at times — most notably with a 417-yard performance by Arkansas' Ryan Mallett.

But for players like Kenny Ladler and Andre Hal, the experience was welcomed.

"Every game I felt like I got a better concept of how the game goes and how to move around out there," Ladler said.

Ladler, expected to start at free safety, started nine games last season and finished fifth in tackles (57). Hal made two starts and should back-up Hayward — the Commodores' best cornerback. Hayward had six interceptions (second most in the SEC) and covered the opponent's top receiver.

At the other cornerback position, Trey Wilson practiced more with the first team in the spring, getting the nod over Eddie Foster, who made 11 starts last year.

At strong safety, Richardson (6-2, 215) is the unit's biggest physical presence. His 98 total tackles and 67 solo stops were team-highs last year.

"You look at the body types, you look at the movement, you look at the athleticism, you look at the guys who have played and had some success — that is one of our better groups in terms of depth," Franklin said.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Place-kicker Ryan Fowler and punter Richard Kent return. Fowler didn't get many opportunities — not attempting

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

LB Chris Marve

Though just 6-feet tall, he packs a powerful, physical punch with a 235-pound build. ... Finished last season with 80 tackles, the second most on the team. ... Had eight tackles for loss, including 2.5 sacks. ... Had two sacks and 10 tackles against Florida. ... Leg injury kept him out of one game and derailed his chances of third straight 100-tackle season. ... Not extremely vocal but brings strong leadership presence to defense and entire team.

EMERGING STAR

WR Jordan Matthews

He has good hands and has a knack for getting open with his 6-4, 205-pound frame. ... Played in just five games and made only one start as a freshman in 2010, but he led the receivers with four touchdowns, all coming in last four games. ... Picked up where he left off with a good spring, including a seven-catch, 103-yard performance in the spring game, with a 23-yard touchdown grab. ... Could be a prime target for goal-line offense, especially on fade routes in the corner of the end zone.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Lafonte Thourogood

Three-star recruit was the jewel of James Franklin's first signing class. ... He's a 6-2, 225-pound dual-threat quarterback who totaled nearly 2,000 yards and 27 touchdowns as a senior at Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach, Va. ... De-committed from Virginia Tech on signing day. ... Visited Vanderbilt spring practice and showed off his physical attributes while tossing the football with a prep teammate. ... Though two-year starter Larry Smith is the frontrunner, Thourogood is expected to compete for starting job as a freshman.

2008 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	19.2	105
Rushing	133.6	73
Passing	122.6	112
Total	256.2	117
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.6	21
Rushing	144.7	69
Passing	174.9	15
Total	319.6	30
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 9	+ 0.69	19

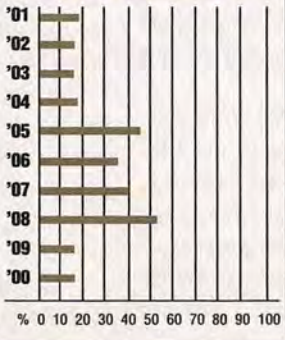
2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	16.3	113
Rushing	160.0	49
Passing	146.3	112
Total	306.3	110
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.3	46
Rushing	197.8	105
Passing	164.9	9
Total	362.8	56
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 3	+ 0.25	45

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	16.9	112
Rushing	138.8	80
Passing	159.4	105
Total	298.3	110
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.2	94
Rushing	193.0	100
Passing	226.3	75
Total	419.3	93
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	79

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
2-10, 1-7

L	NORTHWESTERN	21-23
L	LSU	3-27
W	at Ole Miss	28-14
L	at Connecticut	21-40
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	52-6
L	at Georgia	0-43
L	SOUTH CAROLINA	7-21
L	at Arkansas	14-49
L	FLORIDA	14-55
L	at Kentucky	20-38
L	TENNESSEE	10-24
L	WAKE FOREST	13-34

PLAYER PROFILE

Chris Marve
Photo by Michael Marti

Marve Harbors One Last Bowl Dream

Chris Marve knows when lined up with other linebackers in the Southeastern Conference, he sticks out by not standing out.

"I'm not the prototypical height for a linebacker," he said.

At 6-0, Marve is considered undersized for his position. But, well, so what?

"I love to hit. I love contact," Marve said. "... I feel like a lot of times that (my small stature) plays to my advantage because I can get underneath guys and I have a lower center of gravity."

Marve's been in the middle of a lot of hits in the past three years, and it shows on the stat sheet. He has amassed 306 career tackles, including 121 in 2009. A leg injury last year stopped him from reaching his third straight season with 100-plus tackles, but he still recorded 80 in 11 games.

Thanks to speed and a solid 235-pound build, Marve has turned into a key cog for the Commodore defense. A co-captain last year, he is the lone returning starter among the linebackers. His experience should pay dividends as he has earned all-conference recognition in the last three years. In 2008, he was named a Freshman All-American by, among others, Rivals.com.

"He is a very passionate player and hard worker," Vanderbilt wide receiver Jordan Matthews said. "Very blue collared. He doesn't talk a lot, doesn't try to be too pretty. He just goes up there and gets the job done."

Marve came to Vanderbilt under the radar despite a successful high school career at White Station in Memphis. In his senior year, he was chosen Tennessee's 5A Lineman of the Year and earned all-state honors.

Yet, he was just a two-star recruit ... and Vanderbilt was his only scholarship offer.

"That was four years ago, man," Marve said. "I'm really not concerned with that, but I am happy where I am. I couldn't be happier with the location, the conference we play in, the great education I am getting here. I wouldn't trade it for the world."

But he would gladly take a winning season. The Commodores have gone 4-20 in the past two seasons after winning the Music City Bowl during his freshman year.

This might be Marve's last time playing football, too. He'll test the NFL waters after he graduates in December. If that doesn't pan out, he plans to go to law school.

So from Marve's standpoint, 2011 can't be more of the same.

"This year has to be different," Marve said. "I, personally, as a leader of this team, refuse to let things go how they have gone the last two years."

a field goal in six games, including four straight. He was 8 of 13, but missed all four kicks longer than 35 yards.

Fowler, who received SEC All-Freshman honors in 2009, and backup Carey Spear both had trouble converting longer attempts in the spring, too. Spear will continue the kickoff duties as 40 percent of his boots last year were not returned.

In his first year as a starter, Kent had 84 punts — a team record and the most in the country last year. He averaged 41.8 yards, with opponents averaging just 6.8 yards a return. His 61-yard punt against Arkansas was a career-long.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Franklin gets a warm SEC welcome with a schedule that features nine games against opponents that reached bowls in 2010. Non-conference games against Army, Connecticut and at Wake Forest don't offer much of a reprieve.

But the Commodores do start the season with three consecutive home games, including winnable games against Elon and Ole Miss. From there, though, the road gets tougher. They play back-to-back games at South Carolina and Alabama, and they travel to play Florida in November. Vanderbilt has won just once in Gainesville — in 1945 — and has lost 20 straight in the series.

They'll head east to Knoxville later in the month to face in-state rival Tennessee, which has won 27 of the last 28 meetings.

— Jerome Boettcher

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	ELON	6-5
Sept. 10	CONNECTICUT	8-5
Sept. 17	OLE MISS	4-8
Sept. 24	at South Carolina	9-5
Oct. 8	at Alabama	10-3
Oct. 15	GEORGIA	6-7
Oct. 22	ARMY	7-6
Oct. 29	ARKANSAS	10-3
Nov. 5	at Florida	8-5
Nov. 12	KENTUCKY	6-7
Nov. 19	at Tennessee	6-7
Nov. 26	at Wake Forest	3-9

2010 SEC LEADERS

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PASS EFFICIENCY	G	CMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	TD	EFFIC.
1. Cam Newton, Auburn	14	185	280	7	66.1	2854	30	182.0
2. Greg McElroy, Alabama	13	222	313	5	70.9	2987	20	169.0
3. Ryan Mallett, Arkansas	13	266	411	12	64.7	3869	32	163.6
4. Aaron Murray, Georgia	13	209	342	8	61.1	3049	24	154.5
5. Stephen Garcia, South Carolina	14	224	349	14	64.2	3059	20	148.7
6. Mike Hartline, Kentucky	12	268	405	9	66.2	3178	23	146.4
7. Chris Relf, Mississippi State	13	129	220	6	58.6	1789	13	141.0
8. Matt Simms, Tennessee	11	113	195	5	57.9	1460	8	129.3
9. Jeremiah Masoli, Ole Miss	12	167	296	13	56.4	2039	14	121.1
10. John Brantley, Florida	13	200	329	10	60.8	2061	9	116.4

INTERCEPTIONS	G	NO.	YDS	TD	LONG	AVG/G
1. Robert Lester, Alabama	13	8	102	0	33	0.62
2. Casey Hayward, Vanderbilt	12	6	13	0	13	0.50
3. Morris Claiborne, LSU	12	5	101	0	29	0.42
4. Ahmad Black, Florida	13	5	171	1	80	0.38
Janzen Jackson, Tennessee	13	5	114	0	43	0.38
Prentiss Waggner, Tennessee	13	5	73	3	54	0.38
7. Patrick Peterson, LSU	13	4	134	0	85	0.31
Tramain Thomas, Arkansas	13	4	24	0	11	0.31
9. Jeremy Brown, Florida	11	3	56	1	52	0.27
10. Janoris Jenkins, Florida	12	3	68	1	67	0.25

RUSHING	G	ATT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	AVG/G
1. Cam Newton, Auburn	14	264	1473	5.6	20	105.2
2. Knile Davis, Arkansas	13	204	1322	6.5	13	101.7
3. Marcus Lattimore, South Carolina	13	249	1197	4.8	17	92.1
4. Stevan Ridley, LSU	13	249	1147	4.6	15	88.2
5. Brandon Bolden, Ole Miss	12	163	976	6.0	14	81.3
6. Vick Ballard, Mississippi State	12	186	968	5.2	19	80.7
7. Mark Ingram, Alabama	11	158	875	5.5	13	79.5
8. Tauren Poole, Tennessee	13	204	1034	5.1	11	79.5
9. Michael Dyer, Auburn	14	182	1093	6.0	5	78.1
10. Washaun Ealey, Georgia	12	157	811	5.2	11	67.6

SCORING	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	PTS	PTS/G
1. Vick Ballard, Mississippi State	12	20	0	0	0	120	10.0
2. Josh Jasper, LSU	13	0	28	36	0	120	9.2
3. Cam Newton, Auburn	14	21	0	0	0	126	9.0
4. Wes Byrum, Auburn	14	0	17	72	0	123	8.8
5. Marcus Lattimore, South Carolina	13	19	0	0	0	114	8.8
6. Brandon Bolden, Ole Miss	12	17	0	0	0	102	8.5
7. Blair Walsh, Georgia	13	0	20	46	0	106	8.2
8. Zach Hocker, Arkansas	13	0	16	56	0	104	8.0
9. Mark Ingram, Alabama	11	14	0	0	0	84	7.6
10. Bryson Rose, Ole Miss	12	0	16	43	0	91	7.6

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	TOT	YDS/G
1. Cam Newton, Auburn	14	1473	2854	544	4327	309.1
2. Ryan Mallett, Arkansas	13	-74	3869	455	3795	291.9
3. Mike Hartline, Kentucky	12	-35	3178	437	3143	261.9
4. Aaron Murray, Georgia	13	167	3049	429	3216	247.4
5. Stephen Garcia, South Carolina	14	222	3059	454	3281	234.4
6. Greg McElroy, Alabama	13	-12	2987	373	2975	228.8
7. Jeremiah Masoli, Ole Miss	12	544	2039	417	2583	215.2
8. Chris Relf, Mississippi State	13	713	1789	414	2502	192.5
9. John Brantley, Florida	13	-111	2061	381	1950	150.0
10. Jordan Jefferson, LSU	13	450	1411	332	1861	143.2

PUNTING	G	NO.	YDS	LG	AVG.
1. Tyler Campbell, Ole Miss	12	60	2782	69	46.4
2. Derek Helton, LSU	12	34	1555	82	45.7
3. Chas Henry, Florida	13	50	2253	75	45.1
4. Drew Butler, Georgia	13	50	2225	59	44.5
5. Spencer Lanning, South Carolina	14	54	2383	58	44.1
6. Ryan Tydlacka, Kentucky	13	47	2059	73	43.8
7. Dylan Breeding, Arkansas	13	52	2212	60	42.5
8. Chad Cunningham, Tennessee	13	66	2791	56	42.3
9. Richard Kent, Vanderbilt	12	84	3511	61	41.8
10. Heath Hutchins, Mississippi State	13	59	2450	63	41.5

RECEIVING YDS/GAME	G	REC.	YDS	TD	AVG/G
1. Alshon Jeffery, South Carolina	14	88	1517	9	108.4
2. Julio Jones, Alabama	13	78	1133	7	87.2
3. Randall Cobb, Kentucky	13	84	1017	7	78.2
4. Denarius Moore, Tennessee	13	47	981	9	75.5
5. Chris Matthews, Kentucky	13	61	925	9	71.2
6. Darvin Adams, Auburn	14	52	963	7	68.8
7. Joe Adams, Arkansas	12	50	813	6	67.8
8. Jarius Wright, Arkansas	13	42	788	5	60.6
9. Kris Durham, Georgia	11	32	659	3	59.9
10. Gerald Jones, Tennessee	10	55	596	4	59.6

TEAM STATISTICS

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG/P	TD	AVG/G
1. Auburn	14	948	6989	7.4	72	499.2
2. Arkansas	13	886	6273	7.1	58	482.5
3. Alabama	13	829	5773	7.0	54	444.1
4. Kentucky	13	910	5562	6.1	52	427.8
5. Mississippi State	13	907	5217	5.8	46	401.3
6. Ole Miss	12	826	4798	5.8	45	399.8
7. South Carolina	14	911	5499	6.0	49	392.8
8. Georgia	13	814	5005	6.1	46	385.0
9. Tennessee	13	827	4729	5.7	40	363.8
10. Florida	13	885	4561	5.2	43	350.8
11. LSU	13	839	4437	5.3	39	341.3
12. Vanderbilt	12	781	3579	4.6	24	298.2

TOTAL DEFENSE	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG/P	TD	AVG/G
1. Alabama	13	802	3723	4.6	18	286.4
2. Florida	13	853	3985	4.7	31	306.5
3. LSU	13	822	3993	4.9	30	307.2
4. Georgia	13	828	4271	5.2	38	328.5
5. Arkansas	13	862	4523	5.2	34	347.9
6. Kentucky	13	820	4604	5.6	44	354.2
7. South Carolina	14	927	4961	5.4	36	354.4
8. Mississippi State	13	881	4639	5.3	30	356.8
9. Auburn	14	963	5157	5.4	41	368.4
10. Tennessee	13	913	4968	5.4	37	382.2
11. Ole Miss	12	765	4790	6.3	45	399.2
12. Vanderbilt	12	868	5031	5.8	43	419.2

KICKOFF RETURNS	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG.
1. Florida	13	53	1392	2	26.3
2. LSU	13	46	1190	0	25.9
3. Alabama	13	40	986	1	24.6
4. Auburn	14	63	1482	1	23.5
5. Kentucky	13	59	1343	0	22.8
6. Vanderbilt	12	61	1369	0	22.4
7. Tennessee	13	53	1141	0	21.5
8. Ole Miss	12	63	1349	0	21.4
9. Mississippi State	13	51	1083	1	21.2
10. Georgia	13	45	930	1	20.7
11. South Carolina	14	54	1103	0	20.4
12. Arkansas	13	54	1047	0	19.4

SCORING OFFENSE	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	DXP	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Auburn	14	75	17	74	0	0	1	577	41.2
2. Arkansas	13	60	16	56	2	0	3	474	36.5
3. Alabama	13	58	19	57	0	0	1	464	35.7
4. Georgia	13	51	20	47	1	0	1	417	32.1
5. Kentucky	13	53	12	46	3	0	0	406	31.2
6. South Carolina	14	55	17	52	0	0	0	433	30.9
7. Ole Miss	12	46	16	43	0	0	0	367	30.6
8. Florida	13	52	9	47	1	0	0	388	29.8
9. LSU	13	43	28	36	2	0	2	386	29.7
10. Mississippi State	13	48	13	48	0	0	1	377	29.0
11. Tennessee	13	44	15	40	0	0	1	351	27.0
12. Vanderbilt	12	26	8	23	0	0	0	203	16.9

SCORING DEFENSE	G	TD	FG	XPT	2XP	DXP	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Alabama	13	19	14	18	1	0	0	176	13.5
2. LSU	13	31	7	28	1	0	0	237	18.2
3. Mississippi State	13	30	17	27	0	0	0	258	19.8
4. Florida	13	33	16	29	1	0	0	277	21.3
5. Georgia	13	38	7	34	2	0	0	287	22.1
6. South Carolina	14	39	17	35	1	0	1	324	23.1
7. Arkansas	13	37	15	37	0	0	0	304	23.4
8. Auburn	14	42	14	37	3	0	0	337	24.1
9. Tennessee	13	40	15	37	2	0	0	326	25.1
10. Kentucky	13	47	14	45	0	0	0	369	28.4
11. Vanderbilt	12	47	14	44	0	0	3	374	31.2
12. Ole Miss	12	52	19	45	4	0	0	422	35.2

PUNT RETURN AVG	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG.
1. Arkansas	13	20	311	1	15.6
2. LSU	13	32	432	2	13.5
3. Ole Miss	12	19	240	1	12.6
4. Alabama	13	28	349	1	12.5
5. Georgia	13	21	223	0	10.6
6. Florida	13	33	302	2	9.2
7. Mississippi State	13	17	153	0	9.0
8. Vanderbilt	12	25	181	1	7.2
9. Kentucky	13	31	219	1	7.1
10. Auburn	14	22	136	0	6.2
11. Tennessee	13	18	73	0	4.1
12. South Carolina	14	19	65	0	3.4

RUSHING OFFENSE	G	ATT	YDS	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Auburn	14	652	3987	6.1	41	284.8
2. Mississippi State	13	619	2793	4.5	28	214.8
3. Ole Miss	12	496	2491	5.0	28	207.6
4. LSU	13	538	2414	4.5	29	185.7
5. Alabama	13	467	2378	5.1	30	182.9
6. Florida	13	504	2165	4.3	31	166.5
7. Kentucky	13	452	2061	4.6	26	158.5
8. South Carolina	14	522	2161	4.1	26	154.4
9. Arkansas	13	421	1935	4.6	22	148.8
10. Georgia	13	455	1854	4.1	21	142.6
11. Vanderbilt	12	421	1666	4.0	13	138.8
12. Tennessee	13	408	1420	3.5	14	109.2

RUSHING DEFENSE	G	ATT	YARDS	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Auburn	14	448	1527	3.4	16	109.1
2. Alabama	13	435	1432	3.3	6	110.2
3. South Carolina	14	467	1574	3.4	13	112.4
4. Mississippi State	13	435	1548	3.6	11	119.1
5. Florida	13	481	1698	3.5	14	130.6
6. LSU	13	478	1785	3.7	15	137.3
7. Georgia	13	511	1914	3.7	23	147.2
8. Tennessee	13	474	1983	4.2	23	152.5
9. Ole Miss	12	413	1834	4.4	21	152.8
10. Arkansas	13	522	2114	4.0	21	162.6
11. Kentucky	13	501	2302	4.6	30	177.1
12. Vanderbilt	12	519	2316	4.5	25	193.0

PUNTING	G	NO	YDS	AVG/P	RET	AVG	TB	NET/P
1. Florida	13	51	2253	44.2	109	2.1	3	40.9
2. Georgia	13	50	2225	44.5	77	1.5	6	40.6
3. LSU	13	55	2415	43.9	59	1.1	10	39.2
4. Mississippi State	13	59	2450	41.5	94	1.6	6	37.9
5. Arkansas	13	54	2255	41.8	92	1.7	7	37.5
6. South Carolina	14	54	2383	44.1	280	5.2	5	37.1
7. Vanderbilt	12	88	3511	39.9	176	2.0	5	36.8
8. Ole Miss	12	63	2913	46.2	416	6.6	10	36.5
9. Tennessee	13	70	2948	42.1	220	3.1	9	36.4
10. Alabama	13	41	1607	39.2	64	1.6	3	36.2
11. Kentucky	13	48	2059	42.9	227	4.7	7	35.2
12. Auburn	14	42	1590	37.9	50	1.2	3	35.2

PASS OFFENSE	G	COMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	AVG/G
1. Arkansas	13	301	465	15	64.7	4338	9.3	36	333.7
2. Kentucky	13	298	458	9	65.1	3501	7.6	26	269.3
3. Alabama	13	253	362	5	69.9	3395	9.4	24	261.2
4. Tennessee	13	238	419	15	56.8	3309	7.9	26	254.5
5. Georgia	13	218	359	8	60.7	3151	8.8	25	242.4
6. South Carolina	14	252	389	17	64.8	3338	8.6	23	238.4
7. Auburn	14	194	296	7	65.5	3002	10.1	31	214.4
8. Ole Miss	12	185	330	14	56.1	2307	7.0	17	192.2
9. Mississippi State	13	168	288	13	58.3	2424	8.4	18	186.5
10. Florida	13	230	381	12	60.4	2396	6.3	12	184.3
11. Vanderbilt	12	169	360	11	46.9	1913	5.3	11	159.4
12. LSU	13	173	301	11	57.5	2023	6.7	10	155.6

PASS DEFENSE	G	COMP	ATT	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG.	TD	AVG/G
1. LSU	13	196	344	19	57.0	2208	6.4	15	169.8
2. Florida	13	200	372	22	53.8	2287	6.1	17	175.9
3. Alabama	13	192	367	22	52.3	2291	6.2	12	176.2
4. Kentucky	13	172	319	9	53.9	2302	7.2	14	177.1
5. Georgia	13	174	317	16	54.9	2357	7.4	15	181.3
6. Arkansas	13	187	340	11	55.0	2409	7.1	13	185.3
7. Vanderbilt	12	221	349	9	63.3	2715	7.8	18	226.2
8. Tennessee	13	252	439	18	57.4	2985	6.8	14	229.6
9. Mississippi State	13	258	446	13	57.8	3091	6.9	19	237.8
10. South Carolina	14	289	460	10	62.8	3387	7.4	23	241.9
11. Ole Miss	12	216	352	6	61.4	2956	8.4	24	246.3
12. Auburn	14	325	515	12	63.1	3630	7.0	25	259.3

TURNOVER MARGIN	G	+FUM	+INT	TOT	FUM	-INT	-TOT	-MAR
1. Alabama	13	4	22	26	9	5	14	+12
2. Georgia	13	10	16	26	8	8	16	+10
3. LSU	13	13	19	32	13	11	24	+8
4. Mississippi State	13	15	13	28	8	13	21	+7
5. Auburn	14	10	12	22	10	7	17	+5
6. Tennessee	13	10	18	28	9	15	24	+4
7. Florida	13	7	22	29	15	12	27	+2
8. Arkansas	13	14	11	25	9	15	24	+1
9. South Carolina	14	16	10	26	9	17	26	+0
10. Kentucky	13	7	9	16	11	9	20	-4
11. Vanderbilt	12	6	9	15	8	11	19	-4
12. Ole Miss	12	12	6	18	10	14	24	-6

PICKING **CONFERENCE USA**

Leading with the Pass, It Looks Like a Title Game Re-run

One of the most prolific quarterbacks in the history of Conference USA returns for a sixth season and a chance to continue his assault on the league's — and the nation's — passing records. But Houston's Case Keenum won't be the only quarterback capable of leading his team to a conference title.

UCF returns Jeff Godfrey, last year's league Freshman of the Year, and SMU welcomes back Kyle Padron, prolific in his own right.

Godfrey passed for 2,159 yards and 13 touchdowns after becoming the starter early in the year for coach George O'Leary. He led the Knights to a victory in the C-USA title game and a berth in the AutoZone Liberty Bowl. He also rushed for 566 yards, tops among league quarterbacks.

Last year as a sophomore, Padron developed into the quarterback that coach June Jones always seems to find. Padron passed for 3,828 yards and 31 touchdowns — second to East Carolina's Dominique Davis in both categories — and directed the Mustangs to their first C-USA division title. Behind Padron, the Mustangs have been to back-to-back bowls for the first time since the mid-1980s.

It is with that level of leadership that UCF and SMU should repeat as champions in their respective divisions.

If there is any team poised to crash the party it will be Houston.

Keenum was the nation's leader in nearly every passing category in 2009, including total offense per game (416.4 yards) and completions per game (35.1). With five years of experience — along with veterans at running back (Bryce Beall) and receiver (Patrick Edwards) — Keenum should again wreak havoc on C-USA defenses.

Keenum tore his right ACL in an early season loss to UCLA last season, and it appeared as if his college career was over. But the NCAA granted him a sixth year of eligibility in January.

Tulsa quarterback G.J. Kinne led the conference in total offense (323.9 yards per game) last season. Tulsa returns loads of experience from a team that went 10-3 and tied SMU for the West Division regular-season title.

In the East Division, Southern Miss should challenge UCF behind veteran quarterback Austin Davis, who begins his fourth year as the starter. He already has 53 touchdown passes to break the school record shared by former NFL star Brett Favre.

East Carolina should be a factor in the division race, too. The Pirates begin their second season under former Texas Tech coach Ruffin McNeill and will be led by Davis, a former Boston College player who led C-USA with 37 touchdown passes and 3,967 passing yards.

— Phil Stukenborg

Conference USA Picks

EAST	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. UCF	QB Jeff Godfrey is back after storybook freshman season ended with win over Georgia in Liberty Bowl.	Lost seven defensive starters from the No. 1 defense in the conference.	With Godfrey and a solid running game with Brynn Harvey's return, the Knights should win the East again.
2. Southern Miss	QB Austin Davis gives the Golden Eagles a seasoned veteran to lead Larry Fedora's offense.	Southern Miss lost seven defensive starters, including safety Justin Wilson.	If defense jells, USM is capable of knocking off UCF, which must play Nov. 12 in Hattiesburg.
3. East Carolina	QB Dominique Davis averaged 305 yards passing and was named C-USA Newcomer of the Year.	LBs Dustin Lineback and Melvin Patterson, the Nos. 1 and 2 tacklers, are gone.	Offense is dangerous but much (too much?) will depend on a switch to a 3-4 defensive alignment.
4. Marshall	DE Vinny Curry, who had 18 tackles for loss, is one of the nation's best.	QB Brian Anderson is gone; he passed for 5,000 yards and 34 TDs in the past two seasons.	Second-year coach Doc Holliday's young team has matured and will post its share of upsets.
5. UAB	QB Bryan Ellis earned starting job early in season, passing for 2,940 yards and 25 TDs.	Two of UAB's leading receivers — Frantrell Forrest and Mike Jones — are gone.	RB Pat Shed and new defensive coordinator Tommy West give hope of halting six-year losing skid.
6. Memphis	Defensive linemen Dontari Poe and Frank Trotter are among best in the conference.	QB Ryan Williams, who started last year as a freshman, left the team.	Another difficult year for the Tigers, who ranked near the bottom nationally in multiple categories in 2010.
WEST			
1. SMU	SMU's Kyle Padron has emerged as one of the league's best quarterbacks.	WR Aldrick Robinson is gone after leading C-USA with 1,301 receiving yards and 14 touchdowns.	Behind Padron, the program's return to prominence continues.
2. Houston	QB Case Keenum was granted sixth year of eligibility after early-season injury in 2010.	Cougars defense ranked next-to-last against the run, yielding 209 yards per game.	Keenum and WR Patrick Edwards (1,110 yards, 13 TDs last season) will be unstoppable.
3. Tulsa	QB G.J. Kinne, the league's offensive MVP, is back along with nine other starters on offense.	Golden Hurricane's pass defense ranked last in C-USA, allowing 319 yards per game.	Tulsa is a threat with all of its offensive weapons and special teams player extraordinaire Damaris Johnson.
4. Rice	RB Sam McDuffie, the league's No. 3 rusher last season, is back.	The Owls, 6-18 in the past two seasons, are just 19-30 under coach David Bailiff.	Keep an eye on 6-7 receiver Taylor Cook, a converted quarterback and former Miami Hurricane.
5. Tulane	LB Trent Mackey, a Louisiana native, transferred from Duke and ranked third in C-USA with 124 tackles.	Coach Bob Toledo is 13-35 in four seasons. His predecessor, Chris Scelfo, was 16-30 the previous four years.	Orleans Darkwa — the best name ever for a Tulane RB — should help Tulane out of West Division cellar.
6. UTEP	Nick Lamaison, one of the nation's top JC QBs, signed at midyear and went through spring practice.	Veteran QB Trevor Vittatoe and veteran WR Kris Adams are gone.	Looks like a sixth straight losing season, which likely would end Mike Price's eight-year run in El Paso.

Lindy's 2011 ALL C-USA Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM			
QB	Case Keenum	Sr.	Houston
RB	Zach Line	Jr.	SMU
RB	Bryce Beall	Sr.	Houston
WR	Lance Lewis	Sr.	East Carolina
WR	Patrick Edwards	Sr.	Houston
TE	Luke Willson	Jr.	Rice
C	Trent Dupy	Jr.	Tulsa
OL	Clint Anderson	Sr.	Tulsa
OL	Kelvin Beachum	Sr.	SMU
OL	Matt McCants	Sr.	UAB
OL	Chris Thompson	Sr.	Houston
AP	Damaris Johnson	Sr.	Tulsa
K	Danny Hrapmann	Sr.	Southern Miss
DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM			
DL	Vinny Curry	Sr.	Marshall
DL	Cordarro Law	Sr.	Southern Miss
DL	Taylor Thompson	Sr.	SMU
DL	Elliott Henigan	Sr.	UAB
LB	Trent Mackey	Jr.	Tulane
LB	Ja'Gared Davis	Jr.	SMU
LB	Marcus McGraw	Sr.	Houston
DB	Josh Robinson	Jr.	UCF
DB	Emmanuel Davis	Sr.	East Carolina
DB	Marco Nelson	So.	Tulsa
DB	Kemal Ishmael	Jr.	UCF
P	Kyle Martens	Sr.	Rice
OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM			
QB	G.J. Kinne	Sr.	Tulsa
RB	Orleans Darkwa	Fr.	Tulane
RB	Ronnie Weaver	Sr.	UCF
WR	Cole Beasley	Sr.	SMU
WR	Damaris Johnson	Sr.	Tulsa
TE	Adam Nissley	Sr.	UCF
C	Blake McJunkin	Sr.	SMU
OL	Nick Pieschel	Sr.	UCF
OL	Ron Leary	Sr.	Memphis
OL	Grant Harner	Jr.	East Carolina
OL	C.J. Wood	Sr.	Marshall
AP	Quincy McDuffie	Jr.	UCF
K	Tom Hornsey	So.	Memphis
DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM			
DL	Dontari Poe	Jr.	Memphis
DL	Troy Davis	Jr.	UCF
DL	Desmond Moses	Jr.	Tulane
DL	Darius Nall	Sr.	UCF
DL	Scott Solomon	Sr.	Rice
LB	Korey Williams	Sr.	Southern Miss
LB	Josh Linan	Sr.	UCF
LB	Marvin Burdette	Jr.	UAB
DB	Travaun Nixon	Sr.	UTEP
DB	Travis Bradshaw	Sr.	Rice
DB	Chris Banjo	Sr.	SMU
DB	Deron Wilson	So.	Southern Miss
P	Ian Campbell	Jr.	UTEP

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 3	SMU at Texas A&M
Sept. 3	UCLA at Houston
Sept. 3	East Carolina at South Carolina
Sept. 10	Boston College at UCF
Sept. 10	Virginia Tech at East Carolina
Sept. 23	UCF at BYU
Oct. 1	North Carolina at East Carolina
Oct. 8	East Carolina at Houston
Oct. 15	UCF at SMU
Oct. 22	SMU at Southern Miss
Nov. 5	Southern Miss at East Carolina
Nov. 12	UCF at Southern Miss
Nov. 19	SMU at Houston
Nov. 19	UCF at East Carolina
Nov. 26	Houston at Tulsa

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Champion
Liberty Bowl vs. SEC

C-USA #2
St. Petersburg Bowl vs. Big East

C-USA #3
Ticket City Bowl vs. Big Ten

C-USA #4
Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl vs. BYU or At-Large

C-USA #5
New Orleans Bowl vs. Sun Belt

C-USA #6
Sheraton Hawaii Bowl vs. WAC

C-USA #7
Military Bowl vs. ACC
(C-USA is secondary selection in 2011)

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Vinny Curry	DL	Sr.	Marshall	His 12 sacks ranked fifth nationally.
2. G.J. Kinne	QB	Sr.	Tulsa	Had 3,650 yards and 37 TD passes last year.
3. Case Keenum	QB	Sr.	Houston	Will break several NCAA passing records.
4. Korey Williams	LB	Sr.	So. Miss	Led team with 92 tackles in 2010.
5. Emmanuel Davis	DB	Sr.	East Carolina	Team-leading 11 pass breakups in 2010.
6. Dominique Davis	QB	Sr.	East Carolina	Accounted for 46 of ECU's 60 TDs.
7. Damaris Johnson	WR	Sr.	Tulsa	Superb all-around threat could fill lots of roles.
8. Lance Lewis	WR	Sr.	East Carolina	Had ECU record 14 TD catches last year.
9. Bryce Beall	RB	Sr.	Houston	League's No. 4 rusher; 5.3 yards per carry.
10. Kyle Martens	P	Sr.	Rice	46-yard average, had 14 inside the 20.

Most Valuable Player	Offensive Player of the Year	Defensive Player of the Year	Newcomer of the Year
Case Keenum, QB, Houston	G.J. Kinne, QB, Tulsa	Vinny Curry, DL, Marshall	Reggie Bullock, RB, East Carolina

HONOR ROLL

Most accurate passer	G.J. Kinne	Tulsa
Strongest arm	Case Keenum	Houston
Best scrambler	Jeff Godfrey	UCF
Coolest in the clutch	Dominique Davis	East Carolina
Toughest to bring down	Zach Line	SMU
Best hands	Cole Beasley	SMU
Most dangerous deep threat	Patrick Edwards	Houston
Best pass blocker	Matt McCants	UAB
Best run blocker	Clint Anderson	Tulsa
Best pass rusher	Vinny Curry	Marshall
Best cover corner	Josh Robinson	UCF
Special teams demon	Damaris Johnson	Tulsa

MEMPHIS TIGERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Eric Price **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Hopson** **STADIUM: Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium: 62,380**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
1-11 overall, 0-8 C-USA (6th, East)

COACH:
Larry Porter — At Memphis and overall: 1-11, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
10; 3 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Jerrell Rhodes, WR Marcus Rucker, WR Billy Foster, DT Dontari Poe, DT Frank Trotter, CB Mohammed Seisay

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
A defensive front coached by former Alabama head coach Mike DuBose is expected to create havoc in Conference USA. Poe is an athletic 6-5, 350 pounder, while tackle Trotter is a run-stopper. The offense will become more spread-oriented giving Rucker a chance to shine. After an impressive spring, Foster is poised to become the team's big-play threat.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Memphis lost starting quarterback Ryan Williams, who decided to transfer as spring practice began. The departure of Williams, a true freshman last year, means the program will not have a quarterback on the roster who has taken a snap at this level. Depth at running back is thin behind Rhodes.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Ryan Williams, LB Jamon Hughes, FS Marcus Ball, RB Gregory Ray, WR Jermaine McKenzie, DB D.A. Griffin

OVERVIEW:
The program's struggles continued in Porter's first season. Memphis was able to post only one victory — over a Middle Tennessee State team minus its starting quarterback. Getting more wins this season will depend on the play of the inexperienced quarterbacks. It appears as if Porter's second season will be only slightly better than his first.

Tigers need major improvement on offense and defense

Former University of Memphis running back Larry Porter took over at his alma mater last season knowing he'd have a challenge ahead of him.

But it's unlikely he expected the cupboard to be so bare.

The Tigers struggled through a difficult season, one marked by repeated blowouts fueled by deficiencies on both sides of the ball. The dearth of talent was so severe that the Tigers ranked near the bottom of most NCAA categories in offense, defense and special teams. Their punt return unit was last of 120 teams, managing only five yards in 12 games.

Offensively, Memphis was only slightly better. It ranked 117th in total offense and 119th in scoring. Defensively, the Tigers were 115th in total defense and 117th in scoring defense. The Tigers lost nine consecutive games to end the season, allowing 45 or more points four times during the stretch.

The defense played slightly better at season's end, but the offense failed to score at least 20 points in the final eight games, prompting Porter to go to a more spread-oriented offense in a spread-dominated, high-scoring Conference USA.

Ten teams in the league averaged at least 24.9 points, with Tulsa topping 41 points per game. Memphis managed slightly more than 14 points.

To address offensive production, Porter made several changes on the staff. He gave quarterbacks coach Kevin McGiven the added responsibility of calling the plays, also promoting him to assistant head coach. New offensive line coach Blake Miller was named co-offensive coordinator, sharing those duties with returning offensive coordinator Eric Price.

Can those changes take root right away? It won't be easy. Memphis must break in a new quarterback for the second straight year, there are four new starters on the offensive line, and no depth behind running back Jerrell Rhodes.

OFFENSE

Porter's spring got off on a sour note when quarterback Ryan Williams, who started last fall as a freshman, asked for his release as workouts began. It forced Porter to move junior college transfer Andy Summerlin, who missed last fall with a shoulder injury, to the No. 1 spot.

After spring practice, Porter was seeking consistency from the position. Summerlin, a sophomore, goes into preseason workouts as the No. 1 quarterback but likely will be pushed by incoming freshmen Taylor Reed and Domonique Harris, both dual-threat quarterbacks ideally suited for the spread offense.

"I'd like for us to be much more efficient in just dropping back, making decisions and throwing the ball," Porter said.

What is encouraging to Porter is a talented receiving corps that has a healthy, productive mix of youth and experience.

Junior Marcus Rucker returns after leading the team in receiving last fall and is joined by possession receiver Tannar Rehrer, a gutsy senior unafraid to sacrifice his body flashing across the middle. Newcomers Reggie Travis and Kevin Wright, freshmen from Louisiana, were impressive at times during the spring.

"Marcus Rucker is a guy I feel we'll be able to count on," Porter said.

And Billy Foster, a receiver/running

back, impressed Porter with his big-play capability from the outset of the spring.

"Billy Foster is one of those guys that we will find ways to get the ball into his hands," Porter said. "He's earned that. He started out the spring strong and he got stronger."

DEFENSE

After a forgettable first season in which his young secondary was scorched on a repeated basis, Porter is confident the cornerback position is stronger.

Second-year cornerbacks Mo Seisay, Lonnie Ballentine and Taurean Nixon were playmakers during the spring, so much so that Porter considered sliding Seisay to safety to keep his most talented defensive backs on the field at the same time.

The Tigers will be somewhat thin at safety but is hopeful Akeem Davis and Derek Smith will be healthy. Davis missed part of last season with a knee injury; Smith sat out the whole year with a torn ACL.

The team's linebacker corps lost one of the nation's top tacklers in Jamon Hughes, but likely will be a more athletic unit with the addition of junior college transfer Kenyata Johnson and newcomer Fred Harvey.

The defense should be strong up front. Under the guidance of Mike DuBose, the former Alabama head coach, the lines boasts Dontari Poe and Frank Trotter, both potential all-conference picks. Poe is deceptively quick at 6-5, 350 pounds, and Trotter is a challenge to block.

Porter got a pleasant surprise in 2010 from freshman defensive end Corey Jones, a local product. Jones finished with five tackles for loss and had four starts, including in each of the final two games.

"(The defensive line) is ready to have a better season," Porter said. "I think they feel themselves becoming more dominant."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Memphis won't have much to worry about in the kicking game. Junior Paulo Henriques returns to handle the placekicking duties. Sophomore Tom Hornsey, a former Australian Rules Football player, is back after a solid first year, his first seeing American college football.

Where the Tigers must make vast improvement is in the return games, which ranked near the bottom of the NCAA statistics. Memphis was 120th (last) in average yards per punt return and 117th in kick returns.

— Phil Stukenborg

Frank Trotter
Photo by Joe Murphy/Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2010 stats: 91.6 ypg rushing (12th in C-USA/116th NCAA), 193.4 passing (11th/81st), 285.0 total offense (12th/117th), 14.4 ppg (12th/119th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Andy Summerlin	So.	Missed last season with a major shoulder injury.	Taylor Reed, Fr.
RB	Jerrell Rhodes	So.	No. 2 rusher last year; had 469 yards in reserve role.	Brandon Hayes, Fr.
WR	Marcus Rucker*	Jr.	Leading returning receiver (704 yds, 8 TDs).	Kevin Wright, Fr.
WR	Curtis Johnson	Jr.	Had 22 catches for 230 yards, third among returnees.	Tannar Rehrer, Sr.
WR	Billy Foster*	Sr.	Big-play capability at receiver and running back.	Cam Baker, Sr.
TE	Brooks Johnson	So.	Averaged 10.2 yards per catch in a reserve role.	Justin Henderson, So.
LT	Ronald Leary*	Sr.	Only returnee on line has 24 consecutive starts.	Taylor Fallin, Fr.
LG	A.J. Antonescu	So.	Older brother Michael is A.J.'s backup.	Michael Antonescu, Sr.
C	Al Bond	Fr.	A left-handed snapper, moved to center in the spring.	Chris Schuetz, So.
RG	D'Angelo McCray	Sr.	Makes the transition from defensive line.	Jimmy Robinson, So.
RT	Jordan Devey	Jr.	Mammoth JC transfer is 6-7, 345 pounds.	Nick Chartain, So.
K	Paulo Henriques*	Jr.	Made 14 of 18 field goal attempts, 6 of 10 from 40 plus.	Tyler Spurlock, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2010 stats: 171.9 ypg rushing (8th in C-USA/81st NCAA), 288.8 passing (10th/116th), 460.7 total defense (11th/115th), 39.8 ppg (12th/117th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Daniel Thomas	Sr.	Made five starts last season.	Martin Ifedi, Fr.
DT	Frank Trotter*	Sr.	Led team with 16.5 TFL; led D-line with 80 stops.	Tommy Walker, Sr.
NT	Dontari Poe*	Jr.	All C-USA candidate had 6.5 tackles for loss.	Devin Clark, Fr.
DE	Corey Jones*	So.	Had team-high three sacks and made four starts.	Dasmine Cathey, Sr.
LB	Ricky Holloway	Jr.	Played in each of team's 12 games as a reserve.	Fred Harvey, Fr.
LB	DeRon Furr*	Jr.	Exceptional athlete; signed with Auburn as a QB.	Terrence Thomas, Sr.
LB	Kenyata Johnson	Jr.	Junior college transfer had an impressive spring.	Charles Harris, Fr.
CB	Taurean Nixon	So.	Developed into a steady contributor as a freshman.	Lavaris Edwards, Sr.
CB	Mohammed Seisay*	So.	Solid spring after finishing with 39 stops in 2010.	Lonnie Ballentine, So.
SS	Akeem Davis	Jr.	Knee injuries have hampered his career; is healthy now.	Cannon Smith, Jr.
FS	Derek Smith	So.	Tore ACL before start of 2010 preseason, missed year.	Mitch Huelsing, Jr.
P	Tom Hornsey*	So.	Ex-Aussie rules player averaged 42.7 yards per punt.	Austin Weaver, Jr.

*Returning Starter

TIGERS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
LaMarvin Ashley	ATH	5-10	165	✪✪✪✪	McComb, MS	McComb
As a senior, had 524 yards passing and seven touchdowns... Had 259 yards rushing and 67 yards receiving... Had 720 yards passing and eight touchdowns as a junior... Three-year letterman...						
Reggis Ball	LB	5-11	200	✪✪✪	Stone Mountain, GA	Stephenson
Had 96 tackles, 62 solo, including four tackles for loss, three quarterback sacks and one interception as a senior... As a junior, had 80 tackles, 34 solo, and three interceptions...						
Ryan Byrd	ATH	6-0	170	✪✪✪	Greensburg, LA	St. Helena
Rivals.com rated No. 43 athlete nationally and No. 23 player in Louisiana... Had 27 receptions for 509 yards and two touchdowns as a senior... Had 32 tackles and eight passes broken up...						
Nicholas Chartain	OL	6-5	320	✪✪	New Orleans, LA	Independence C.C.
All-Conference... Helped team to more than 2,800 yards offense and 20 touchdowns in 2010... Second-team All-State guard in high school... Had over 100 pancake blocks in final two seasons...						
Michael Davis	LB	6-2	215	✪✪	Columbus, GA	Carver
As a senior, had 83 tackles, including 11 tackles for loss, three interceptions and scored two defensive touchdowns... Helped team to state championship game as a junior.						
Jordan Devey	OL	6-6	320	✪✪✪	American Fork, UT	Snow College
All-Conference at Snow College... Had 37 pancake blocks as a sophomore... Did not allow a quarterback sack... Graded above 85 percent in blocking assignments during both seasons at Snow...						
Taylor Fallin	OT	6-6	320	✪✪	Bowie, MD	Hargrave Military
At Hargrave in 2010, had more than 1,200 yards rushing, averaging almost five yards per carry.						
Zach Gholson	DL	6-3	250	✪✪✪	Carlsbad, CA	Palomar College
Palomar College 2010 Most Valuable Player... Had 69 tackles, including four tackles for loss, three quarterback sacks, two fumbles recovered and one fumble caused... Walked on at Boise State and played in nine games as a true freshman in 2009...						
Artaves Gibson	RB	6-1	220	✪✪✪	Memphis	Mitchell
Ranked No. 22 player in Tennessee by Rivals.com... Two-time All-State... As a senior, had more than 500 yards rushing and scored five touchdowns in four games... As a sophomore, had more than 1,700 yards rushing and 23 touchdowns.						
Monte Golden	C/OG	6-2	301	✪✪✪	Jacksonville, NC	Northside
All-State... Four-year starter... As a senior, had 12 pancake blocks... Center for basketball team... Threw shot put for track team.						
Kevin Green	LB	6-1	205	✪✪	Memphis	Wooddale
Two-time team captain... Had 75 tackles, five passes deflected, two fumbles caused and three fumbles recovered as a senior... As a junior, had 115 tackles, including 17 tackles for loss.						
Carl Harris	RB	5-10	190	✪✪✪	Dallas, TX	Woodrow Wilson
Second-team All-State... Had 1,836 yards rushing and 25 touchdowns as a senior, averaging 7.4 yards per carry... As a junior, had 1,200 yards rushing and 21 touchdowns... All-Region in track.						
Charles Harris	LB	6-2	215	✪✪✪	Memphis	Whitehaven
Rivals.com rated No. 25 player in Tennessee... As a senior, had 34 tackles, 22 solo, and four quarterback sacks... Had 68 tackles and three interceptions, returning one for touchdown, as a junior.						
Domonique Harris	QB	6-5	225	✪✪✪	Southaven, MS	Southaven
Had 2,208 yards passing and 36 touchdowns as a senior... Had 369 yards rushing and six touchdowns... As a junior, had 1,680 yards passing and 20 touchdowns...						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Bakari Hollier	DB	5-9	195	✪✪	Lafayette, LA	Acadiana
Two-time All-State... Helped team to state championship... Had 68 tackles and seven interceptions as a senior... Scored two defensive touchdowns... As a junior, had 69 tackles and six interceptions.						
Derek Howard	WR	6-2	190	✪✪	Boutte, LA	Hahnville
As a senior, had 37 receptions for 505 yards and five touchdowns.						
Ricky Hunter	DT	6-4	280	✪✪	Loachapoka, AL	Loachapoka
Had 98 tackles as a senior... Scored three defensive touchdowns... As a junior, had 67 tackles, five quarterback sacks, one interception and two fumbles caused.						
Jermaine Johnson	WR	6-3	170	✪✪✪	Houma, LA	Ellender
Ranked No. 34 player in Louisiana by Rivals.com... Had 41 receptions for 715 yards and nine touchdowns as a senior... As a junior, had 40 receptions for 905 yards and eight touchdowns.						
Kenyata Johnson	LB	6-2	220	✪✪✪	Jackson, MS	Hinds C.C.
As a sophomore at Hinds, had 45 tackles, 41 solo, including seven tackles for loss for minus 17 yards... Had 85 tackles and two quarterback sacks as a high school senior... All-State in track.						
Tyler Marzette	OT	6-6	320	✪✪	Birmingham, AL	Huffman
Had 61 pancake blocks as a senior... As a junior, had 43 pancake blocks.						
Bobby McCain	DB	5-11	180	✪✪✪	Oxford, AL	Oxford
Rivals.com rated No. 36 player in Alabama... Had 35 tackles and one interception as a senior... Had 25 receptions for 378 yards and three touchdowns... Scored six rushing touchdowns.						
Tyriq Patrick	WR	6-3	190	✪✪✪	Philadelphia, MS	Philadelphia
As a senior, had 42 receptions for 524 yards and eight touchdowns, catching a pass in all 13 games played... Had 40 receptions for 587 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior.						
Donald Pennington	DT	6-2	300	✪✪	Amite, LA	Amite
Two-time All-State... District Defensive Most Valuable Player... Team captain... Had 145 tackles, 21 quarterback sacks and returned two interceptions for touchdown as a senior.						
Joe Price	RB	5-9	175	✪✪✪	Madison, MS	Madison Central
Jackson Clarion-Ledger All-Metro... As a senior, had 1,094 yards rushing and scored 10 touchdowns... Had 580 yards rushing and five touchdowns on 62 carries as a junior...						
Terry Redden	DT	6-2	285	✪✪✪	Memphis	Whitehaven
Ranked No. 38 defensive tackle nationally and No. 5 player in Tennessee by Rivals.com... Two-time All-State... District Defensive Player of the Year... Four-year letterman.						
Taylor Reed	QB	6-3	210	✪✪	El Dorado, AR	El Dorado
Led team to two consecutive state championships and three straight appearances in the championship game... Had 2,417 yards passing and 27 touchdowns as a senior... Had almost 300 yards rushing and 10 touchdowns... As a junior, had more than 2,300 yards passing and 21 touchdowns.						
Robert Roquemore	OT	6-6	310	✪✪	Covington, GA	Newton
Two-time All-Region on offense... Four-year letterman.						
Jamere Valentine	WR	6-2	210	✪✪✪	Myrtle Beach, SC	Butte College
At Butte College in 2010, had 17 for 190 yards and one touchdown... Had 51 receptions for 487 yards and four touchdowns at Georgia Southern in 2009...						
Perrance Ward	DB	6-0	205	✪✪	West Point, MS	East Mississippi C.C.
Had 62 tackles, 44 solo, and five interceptions for East Mississippi... *Jackson Clarion Ledger* Top 125 high school senior in 2007.						

A LOOK AT THE TIGERS

RESULTS

1-11, 0-8

L	at Mississippi State	7-49
L	at East Carolina	27-49
W	MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE	24-17
L	at UTEP	13-16
L	TULSA	7-48
L	at Louisville	0-56
L	SOUTHERN MISS	19-41
L	HOUSTON	17-56
L	TENNESSEE	14-50
L	at Marshall	13-28
L	at UAB	15-31
L	UCF	17-37

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD
R. Williams	165	290	10	56.9	2075	13
C. Smith	22	43	3	51.2	246	1

RUSHING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
G. Ray	157	676	4.3	3	34
J. Rhodes	116	469	4.0	1	36
J. Longstreet	15	42	2.8	0	14

RECEIVING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
M. Rucker	41	704	17.2	8	81
J. McKenzie	25	409	16.4	3	43
T. Rehrer	23	284	12.3	0	25

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Hughes 147, F. Trotter 80, M. Ball 66
Tackles for loss: F. Trotter 16.5, T. Thomas 8.5, D. Furr 7
Sacks: T. Thomas 3, C. Jones 3, D. Cathey 3
Interceptions: M. Ball 2, M. Seisay 2, T. Washington 2

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 1	MISSISSIPPI STATE	9-4
Sept. 10	at Arkansas State	4-8
Sept. 17	AUSTIN PEAY	2-9
Sept. 24	SMU	7-7
Oct. 1	at Middle Tennessee State	6-7
Oct. 8	at Rice	4-8
Oct. 15	EAST CAROLINA	6-7
Oct. 22	at Tulane	4-8
Oct. 29	at UCF	11-3
Nov. 12	UAB	4-8
Nov. 19	MARSHALL	5-7
Nov. 26	at Southern Miss	8-5

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI GOLDEN EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Blake Anderson | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dan Disch** | **STADIUM: M.M. Roberts Stadium: 36,000**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
8-5 overall, 5-3 C-USA (T-2nd, East)

COACH:
Larry Fedora — At Southern Miss and overall: 22-17, 3 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 6 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Austin Davis, RB Kendrick Hardy, DE Octavius Thomas, DT Cordarro Law, LB Korey Williams, CB Deron Wilson, K Daniel Hrapmann

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Fedora should be able to keep USM at or above its point-production level of a year ago when the Golden Eagles averaged 37 per game. Ideally suited for the spread offense, Davis is an accurate passer (20 TDs, six INTs) and can run if needed, as evidenced by his 452 yards and 10 touchdowns on the ground. There is still depth at receiver, and the running game should be productive behind Hardy and Desmond Johnson.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The secondary suffered key losses with the departure of cornerbacks C.J. Bailey and Chico Hunter and safety Justin Wilson. Offensively, tight end Johdrick Morris, who led the team in receiving last fall, is a huge loss, especially with promising newcomer Zeke Walters transferring to Samford after his freshman season.

KEY LOSSES:
WR DeAndre Brown, C Cameron Zipp, TE Johdrick Morris, DT Anthony Gray, S Justin Wilson, CB C.J. Bailey, CB Chico Hunter

OVERVIEW:
Led by QB Austin Davis, Fedora has the personnel to challenge UCF for the East Division crown. Expect the Nov. 12 home game against UCF to be one of more anticipated in C-USA this season. New defensive coordinator Dan Disch will be a key as he introduces a 4-2-5 formation intent on slowing the league's high-scoring spread offenses.

How About a Little Defense With All That Offense?

Known for having one of Conference USA's premier defenses during the first 10 years of the league, Southern Miss has watched several programs assume that reputation.

Golden Eagles coach Larry Fedora wants it back.

During the offseason, he made a move to fortify his defense. He hired Dan Disch as his defensive coordinator, and Disch installed a 4-2-5 look that Fedora is convinced could be the answer.

"You can get there (to cover receivers in the spread offense) if you have the personnel, but with the type of kids we're recruiting and the athletes we have right now, we have to put more speed on the field," Fedora said. "This will enable us to do that."

If Southern Miss can address its defensive shortcomings and match, defensively, what East Carolina did two years ago and what UCF did last year, there's a strong possibility that the Golden Eagles could be the team to beat in the C-USA's East Division.

"The guys bought in and really played the defense well," Fedora said after spring practice. "The first group has really excelled with it."

UCF won the C-USA title last year and defeated Georgia in the Liberty Bowl behind a defensive unit that allowed only 240 points in 14 games. Southern Miss yielded 384 points — nearly 30 per game.

Having his personnel playing a style suited to their talents should help. Fedora said Jamie Collins will play a hybrid linebacker-end position that will allow him to become more of a factor in Disch's defense.

"Jamie is a guy who can put his hand on the ground and rush the passer, but he can also drop (into pass coverage)," Fedora said. "He's just in a position where we can do a lot of things with him."

Whether the changes are enough remains to be seen. But with Fedora's teams traditionally scoring at a prolific rate — 36.8 per game in 2010 — and with a veteran quarterback returning, a shake-up defensively could shake up the East.

OFFENSE

In a league boasting its share of veteran quarterbacks, Southern Miss might boast the most proficient one.

Senior Austin Davis returns for his fourth season and is coming off a year in which he earned second-team all-conference honors and broke the school's career touchdown passing record shared by Brett Favre. Davis has 53 entering the season.

Davis has been the starting quarterback in each of the three seasons Fedora has been in charge of the program. Last year, Davis tossed 20 touchdowns to set the school record and was picked off only six times. He was one of four league quarterbacks to surpass 3,000 passing yards.

"It's a very comfortable feeling knowing that the guy understands exactly what we want and how we want it done," Fedora said of Davis, who has been intercepted only 16 times in 1,100 career pass attempts. "He is a tremendous leader."

The Golden Eagles should be strong in the backfield.

Kendrick Hardy led the team with 903 rushing yards and Desmond Johnson, who finished with 611 yards and eight touchdowns, ended a solid sophomore season by rushing for 102 yards and a touchdown in the bowl game.

Redshirt freshman Jamal Woodyard

impressed Fedora in the spring and displayed some of the make-you-miss style exhibited by Johnson. Woodyard could be a breakaway threat.

Four of the team's top five receivers are back, led by Kelvin Bolden, who finished with 722 yards and six touchdowns. He averaged 15.7 yards per catch. A potential red-zone threat will be converted quarterback Dominique Sullivan, a 6-4 sophomore with a 32-inch vertical leap.

DEFENSE

Disch, the new defensive coordinator, comes to Hattiesburg after spending the past six years at Illinois. He'll have seven starters returning to play a new defense he hopes will keep opponents from their recent high-scoring ways.

Southern Miss allowed four of its last five opponents in 2010 to score 30 or more points and yielded 56 to Tulsa in a loss in the regular-season finale.

The Golden Eagles should be strong where they traditionally have been stout: up front. All-league second-team defensive lineman Cordarro Law will be joined by Khyri Thornton, a player Fedora predicts could become a star in the league. Collins will play the hybrid position "to fill out the front" according to Fedora.

At linebacker, there is experience, too. Ronnie Thornton and Korey Williams are fifth-year seniors. Williams led the Golden Eagles with 93 tackles, including a team-high 15.5 for lost yardage. Thornton added 61 stops and tied for the team lead with two fumble recoveries.

Playing five defensive backs will be new, but Fedora wants to take advantage of the secondary's overall speed. Marquese Wheaton and Deron Wilson adjusted quickly in the spring, which was encouraging to Fedora. Wilson was extremely active last season with a team-high 12 pass breakups, in addition to three interceptions.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Daniel Hrapmann gives the Golden Eagles the top returning kicker in the conference. Hrapmann, who struggled some his sophomore season, had a memorable junior year making 26 of 31 field goal attempts and converting each of his 55 extra-point tries. He led the conference in scoring at 10.2 points per game.

The return game remains solid with Tracy Lampley back for his junior season. He ranked sixth in the conference in punt returns and teamed with kick returner Reggie Hunt (26.1 yards per return) to give the Golden Eagles one of C-USA's best tandems.

— Phil Stukenborg

Austin Davis
Photo by Chuck Cook-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2010 stats: 200.8 ypg rushing (2nd in C-USA/20th NCAA), 252.5 passing (6th/35th), 453.4 total offense (3rd/18th), 36.8 ppg (3rd/15th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Austin Davis*	Sr.	Had 20 touchdowns, only six interceptions last fall.	Chris Campbell, So.
RB	Desmond Johnson	Jr.	Second leading rusher with 611 yards and eight TDs.	Kendrick Hardy, So.
WR	Quentin Pierce*	Jr.	Third-leading receiver in 2010 (454 yards, four TDs).	Dominique Sullivan,So.
WR	Ryan Balentine	Sr.	Made four starts last fall.	Markese Triplett, So.
WR	Kelvin Bolden*	Sr.	Led team with 722 receiving yards and 15.7 ypc.	Francisco Llanos, So.
TE	Ryan Hanks	Jr.	Appeared in 11 games as a sophomore with one start.	Ross Smith, Sr.
LT	Lamar Holmes*	Sr.	Played in 12 games and started five in 2010.	Dyron White, Jr.
LG	Joe Duhon*	Jr.	Had 107 big blocks (includes pancakes, knockdowns).	Darius Barnes, Jr.*
C	Austin Quattrochi	Jr.	Made three spot starts last year because of injuries.	Nathaniel Worrell, So.
RG	Ed Preston	So.	Saw action as a reserve in 2010.	Jonathan Guerry, So.
RT	Jason Weaver	Sr.	Played three games before season-ending knee surgery.	Thomas Edenfield, Sr.
K	Danny Hrapmann*	Jr.	Was 2 of 3 from 50 and beyond, with long of 54.	Corey Acosta, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2010 stats: 113.0 ypg rushing (2nd in C-USA/13th NCAA), 243.4 passing (7th/99th), 356.4 total defense (3rd/47th), 29.5 ppg (5th/81st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Cordarro Law*	Sr.	Second-team all-conference; led team with 11 TFL.	Octavius Thomas, So.*
DT	Khyri Thornton	So.	Lost more than 35 pounds from end of season to spring.	Logan Hickman, Sr.
NT	Terrance Pope	Sr.	Six tackles for loss, including two sacks in 2010.	Andrew Burns, Sr.
DE	Jamie Collins*	Jr.	Expected to excel in hybrid linebacker-end position.	Dasman McCullum, Fr.
LB	Korey Williams*	Sr.	Missed spring with hernia injury, led team with 93 tackles.	Alan Howze, So.
LB	Ronnie Thornton*	Sr.	Had six tackles for loss and two fumble recoveries.	Ta'Dren Kennedy, Fr.
CB	Marquese Wheaton	Sr.	Appeared in 11 games with two interceptions.	Alexander Walters, So.
CB	Deron Wilson*	So.	Led team with 12 pass breakups; also three interceptions.	Marcal Robinson, Jr.
NB	Martez Thompson	Jr.	Junior college transfer (Miss. Gulf Coast CC).	Jerrion Johnson, So.
SS	Kendrick Presley*	Sr.	Started every game and had 63 tackles, third on team.	Alex Smith, So.
FS	Jacorius Cotton	So.	Played 13 games; was among seven true freshmen playing.	Tre Maddox, So.
P	Peter Boehme*	Jr.	Averaged 39.2 yards on 50 kicks with long of 61.	Danny Hrapmann, Jr.

*Returning Starter

GOLDEN EAGLES RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Tray Becton-Martin	WR	5-10	160	✪✪	Eads, TN	Briarcrest Christian
Tennessee Sportswriters Association All-State… As a senior, had 48 receptions for 664 yards and six touchdowns… Had 40 receptions for 602 yards and nine touchdowns as a junior.						
Chris Briggs	WR	6-4	195	✪✪✪	Franklinton, LA	Franklinton
Honorable mention All-State… All-District… Helped team to state championship… Had 54 receptions for 867 yards and 15 touchdowns as a senior… Had three 100-yard receiving games.						
Michael Brinson	DT	6-4	260	✪✪✪	Flowood	University Christian School
Rivals.com rated No. 26 player in Mississippi… District All-Conference… *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* All-Metro… Played running back and defensive end.						
Vincent Brown	OL	6-6	315	✪✪✪	Miami, FL	ASA Institute
Played at the ASA Institute in New York City in 2010… Second-team Northeast Football Conference… Played one season of high school football… Florida All-Star.						
Garrett Clark	OL	6-4	286	✪✪✪	Suwanee, GA	North Gwinnett
Ranked No. 35 offensive guard nationally and No. 51 player in Georgia by Rivals.com… *Orlando Sentinel* second-team All-Central Florida as a junior… Preseason All-State prior to senior season.						
Jordan Greene	OL	6-3	270	✪✪	New Orleans, LA	Brother Martin
Honorable mention All-State… Played in the 2010 Darren Sharper Lake Pontchartrain All-Star Football Classic.						
Cooper Harrington	WR	6-0	180	✪✪✪	Birmingham, AL	Briarwood Christian
Battled through an injury as a senior… As a junior, had 1,314 all-purpose yards, including 290 yards rushing, scored three touchdowns, and had 633 yards receiving with six touchdowns… Passed for two touchdowns.						
Cortez Hartzog	DT	6-4	295	✪✪	Gulfport	Gulfport
All-State… *Biloxi Sun Herald* All-South Mississippi… All-Region… Played in Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Classic…As a senior, had 50 tackles and six quarterback sacks.						
Rashod Hill	OL	6-6	265	✪✪	Jacksonville, FL	Ed White
Played for district champion… Strong blocker on outstanding rushing team.						
Collin Jarbo	TE	6-3	226	✪✪✪	Gadsden, AL	Gaston
Three-time Alabama Sportswriters Association All-State… County Player of the Year… Had 36 receptions for 894 yards and two touchdowns… As a junior, had 643 receiving yards.						
Clifford Johnson	DB	5-11	180	✪✪✪	Jacksonville, FL	Pierce C.C.
Played two seasons at Pierce College… In 2010, had 10 tackles, seven solo, and five passes broken up.						
Emmanuel Johnson	ATH	5-11	175	✪✪✪	McKenzie, AL	McKenzie
All-State… Played in Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Classic and had one reception for 36-yards… As a senior, had more than 3,000 all-purpose yards… All-State defensive back as a junior.						
Trent Johnson	LB	6-2	206	✪✪	Memphis, TN	Christian Brothers
Helped team to division championship… Had 27 tackles, 16 solo, including two tackles for loss, two interceptions and one pass broken up as a senior… As a junior, had 64 tackles.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Ricky Lloyd	QB	6-2	185	✪✪✪	Concord, CA	Concord
Division Player of the Year… Completed 301 passes for 4,451 yards and 52 touchdowns as a senior… Had a 69 percent completion rate… Completed 509 of 791 passes for 7,579 yards and 94 touchdowns with 22 interceptions over three seasons.						
Max Mason	TE	6-7	215	✪✪✪	Kennesaw, GA	North Cobb
As a senior, had 26 receptions for 481 yards and four touchdowns, averaging 18 yards per catch… Averaged 36 yards per punt.						
Rakeem Nunez	DL	6-3	300	✪✪	Phenix City, AL	Central
Tuscaloosa News rated No. 39 player in Alabama… Second-team All-Area… Had 132 career tackles, 17 quarterback sacks and four fumbles caused.						
Lance Schuffert	DS	6-2	245	✪✪	Prattville, AL	Prattville
All-Metro… *Prattville Progress* Super Team… Two-time All-County… Played in the Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Classic… Three-year letterman.						
Chauncey Smith	LB	5-11	230	✪✪	LaGrange, GA	LaGrange
LaGrange Daily News All-County… As a senior, had 104 tackles, 69 solo, including eight tackles for loss, three quarterback sacks, two fumbles caused, four fumbles recovered and two interceptions, both returned for touchdowns… Had 120 tackles, 89 solo, including 26 tackles for loss, one quarterback sack and one interception as a junior.						
Michael Smith	DE	6-5	222	✪✪✪	Birmingham, AL	Wenonah
Honorable mention All-State… Returned a fumble 78 yards for a touchdown as a senior… As a junior, had 97 tackles, 64 solo, and seven quarterback sacks.						
Jhyryn Taylor	WR	6-0	175	✪✪✪	Franklinton, LA	Pearl River C.C.
At Pearl River in 2010, had 19 receptions for 343 yards and four touchdowns… At LSU, played in nine games during his two years… Rivals.com rated No. 50 athlete nationally and No. 12 high school player in Louisiana… All-State in 2007… As a senior, had 47 receptions for 827 yards and 14 touchdowns… Had 40 receptions for 650 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior.						
Martez Thompson	DB	6-1	200	✪✪✪	Pascagoula, MS	Mississippi Gulf Coast C.C.
Had 28 tackles, 23 solo, including two tackles for loss as a Mississippi Gulf Coast sophomore… High school All-State… Played in the Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Classic… As a senior, had 44 tackles and four interceptions… Had 32 receptions for 598 yards.						
Keivondre Watford	TE	6-4	215	✪✪	Tuscaloosa, AL	Central
West Alabama All-Star… As a senior, switched to tight end after playing quarterback… Member of basketball team.						
Ed Wilkins	DB	5-10	165	✪✪	McDonough, GA	Union Grove
Second-team All-Southern Crescent.						
Khalid Wilson	DT	6-1	300	✪✪✪	New Orleans, LA	East Central C.C.
Had 50 tackles, 28 solo, including three tackles for loss, four quarterback sacks and two fumbles caused as an East Central sophomore… As a freshman, had 54 tackles, 42 solo, including five tackles for loss and three quarterback sacks.						
Terrick Wright	LB	6-2	205	✪✪✪	Gadsden, AL	Gadsden City
Rivals.com rated No. 37 player in Alabama… All-Area… Area Most Valuable Player… As a senior, had 104 tackles, 10 quarterback sacks, 17 quarterback pressures and two fumbles caused… Lettered four times in football, three in track and once in basketball.						

A LOOK AT THE GOLDEN EAGLES

RESULTS

8-5, 5-3

L	at South Carolina	13-41
W	PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	34-7
W	KANSAS	31-16
W	at Louisiana Tech	13-12
W	MARSHALL	41-16
L	EAST CAROLINA	43-44
W	at Memphis	41-19
L	UAB (OT)	49-50
W	at Tulane	46-30
W	at UCF	31-21
W	HOUSTON	59-41
L	at Tulsa	50-56
	St. Petersburg Bowl	
L	vs. Louisville	28-31

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD
A. Davis	278	442	6	62.9	3103	20
M. Young	12	23	1	52.2	132	1

RUSHING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
K. Hardy	139	903	6.5	7	60
D. Johnson	115	611	5.3	8	62
A. Davis	145	452	3.1	10	29

RECEIVING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
J. Morris	50	684	13.7	4	55
K. Bolden	46	722	15.7	6	56
Q. Pierce	38	454	11.9	4	67

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Williams 93, J. Collins 76, K. Presley 63
Tackles for loss: K. Williams 15.5, C. Law 11, T. Pope 6
Sacks: C. Law 6, K. Williams 3, three tied with 2.5
Interceptions: J. Wilson 4, D. Wilson 3, four tied with 2

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 3	LOUISIANA TECH	5-7
Sept. 10	at Marshall	5-7
Sept. 17	SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	2-9
Sept. 24	at Virginia	4-8
Oct. 1	RICE	4-8
Oct. 8	at Navy	9-4
Oct. 22	SMU	7-7
Oct. 29	at UTEP	6-7
Nov. 5	at East Carolina	6-7
Nov. 12	UCF	11-3
Nov. 19	at UAB	4-8
Nov. 26	MEMPHIS	1-11

TULANE GREEN WAVE

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dan Dodd | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Stanard** | **STADIUM: Louisiana Superdome: 69,703**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
4-8 overall, 2-6 C-USA (6th, West)

COACH:
Bob Toledo — At Tulane: 13-35, 4 years; overall: 91-103, 17 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 6 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Orleans Darkwa, QB Ryan Griffin, DE Dezman Moses, LB Trent Mackey, CB Jordan Sullen, OT Pat Husain

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Tulane has answers in the backfield and should have the kind of improved offense that can keep pace in Conference USA. The Green Wave has the personnel to improve on its total of 25 sacks from a year ago, and talented ends will help ease concerns in the secondary by providing pressure.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
There are questions at receiver and in the secondary. The defense allowed more than 40 points in six games last season and will face many quality offenses again. The Green Wave finishes with four of five games on the road.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Casey Robottom, WR D.J. Banks, WR Devin Figaro, SS Alex Wacha, LT Pete Hendrickson, TE Cody Sparks

OVERVIEW:
Tulane is looking for a bigger jump than what it got last year, when it added a win from 2009 to its overall record and its conference mark. It will need to make a bowl game to provide job security to the coaching staff and inject life in the program.

All in: It's Time to Win in Toledo's Fifth Season

If this were a poker game, all of Tulane's chips would be on the table.

The Green Wave hasn't been to a bowl game since 2002. After a 4-8 record in 2010 and a last-place finish in the West Division of Conference USA, the coaching staff is on the edge. Coach Bob Toledo and his staff sweated out a lengthy administrative scrutiny before getting his contract extended.

It's a temporary reprieve.

The Green Wave needs seven wins to become bowl eligible — it has 13 games on the docket after adding Hawaii on Nov. 26. The administration is gauging interest in fundraising for an on-campus football stadium — a hot-button issue considering the program's struggles on the field, as well as its troubles in drawing fans to the gigantic Superdome.

Toledo, in his fifth year at Tulane at age 65, is under pressure to produce. And with a strong defensive line, a seasoned quarterback and a star at running back, the Green Wave could be ready to turn a corner.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Ryan Griffin, a 6-5, 215-pound junior, has healed from surgery on a separated right throwing shoulder and another surgery to remove a troublesome bone in his foot.

"I'm definitely feeling good, back 100 percent from my injuries, finally able to (lift)," Griffin said.

"I don't feel sloppy. I feel good and it definitely helped being another year older. Every year, things just slow down more. You're able to move faster and think faster so everything happens slower."

Griffin played through those injuries last season, completing 223 of 372 passes for 2,371 yards and 14 touchdowns.

His stable of running backs rivals only the defensive line for being the strength of the team.

Orleans Darkwa rushed for a school freshman record 925 yards last season, scoring 11 touchdowns.

The Green Wave will use more two-back sets this season thanks to the plethora of talent. Albert Williams and Stephen Barnett came out of the spring on the heels of Darkwa. Two talented freshmen — Robert Kelley and Dante' Butler — are expected to provide immediate competition in the fall.

"If there is one position on the football team that I feel really good about, it's that position right now," Toledo said.

There are some issues at receiver — little depth after two receivers decided to transfer in the offseason.

The strength at running back and problems at receiver should shift the play selection and offensive sets into a more multiple look.

"We will utilize more different position groups than we did a year ago," Toledo said. "We will be very similar to the (New Orleans) Saints; it will be pro spread as opposed to just a spread offense."

The line is developing but didn't have much depth this spring thanks mostly to injuries.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Steve Stanard is beginning his third season with the Green Wave and his system — a morphing 4-3 base defense with roving defensive backs — is now ingrained.

Without question, the line is a big plus for the program. And of that strength, the ends are the cornerstones.

Senior left end Dezman Moses made 11.5 tackles for loss, including four sacks, and forced three fumbles while

recovering one last season. But Toledo said junior right end Austen Jacks is the unsung hero.

"Dezman gets a lot of attention and Jacks doesn't because Jacks isn't flashy," Toledo said.

"He just does everything right. He does his job. He makes some plays, but he never gets you in trouble because he doesn't do things to hurt you. He's kind of a blue-collar guy who is very efficient at what he does.

"He doesn't show up because he doesn't do bad things. He doesn't jump offsides; he doesn't lose contain. He's such a steady player, I'd take a whole bunch of Austen Jacks, let's put it that way."

The line should be better against the run this year. Last year the team ranked a miserable 101st in the country in that category.

Returning middle linebacker Trent Mackey led Tulane with 124 tackles last season. He will work out of a 4-2-5 scheme that is useful against Conference USA's pass-happy offenses. Darryl Farley, the weakside linebacker, also returns.

The secondary is replacing cornerback Phillip Davis, who had three interceptions last season, and safety Alex Wacha, who was 2010's second leading tackler (91 tackles).

Taylor Echols and Kyle Davis are battling for Wacha's spot, while junior Jordan Sullen has won a starting cornerback job. He is a 5-11, 193-pound converted receiver who has caught Toledo's eye.

"Sullen made a huge jump, I mean huge jump," Toledo said. "He's an NFL-caliber guy because he's got the right numbers. He has the great size and speed, great work ethic, those kind of things. He's a guy you look at and say, wow, we're really excited about him."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Tulane hired a new special teams coordinator in the offseason: John Hendrick, who also will coach the defensive line. He brings 29 years of collegiate and professional experience to Tulane, including 11 years of coaching special teams. He assisted the special teams coaches for two NFL teams — the Philadelphia Eagles and the Green Bay Packers.

It's good news for the embattled unit that has cost Tulane games over the past two years.

The Green Wave has been ranked poorly in many categories, including 114th in kickoff returns and 118th nationally in kickoff return yardage defense.

Cairo Santos, the returning kicker, is a highlight of the unit. He got stronger in the offseason after making 13 of 16 field goal attempts as a true freshman.

— Tammy Nunez

Ryan Griffin
Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2010 stats: 127.5 ypg rushing (9th in C-USA/91st NCAA), 245.8 passing (7th/38th), 373.2 total offense (9th/66th), 24.9 ppg (10th/80th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Ryan Griffin*	Jr.	Heart of offense; threw for 2,371 yards last season.	D.J. Ponder, Jr.
RB	Orleans Darkwa*	So.	He's the top returning C-USA rusher.	Albert Williams, Sr.
WR	Joe Kemp	Sr.	Converted from quarterback, had a solid spring.	Wilson Van Hooser, So.
WR	Ryan Grant*	Jr.	Caught 515 yards worth of passes last season.	Wilson Van Hooser, So.
WR	Wilson Van Hooser	So.	Caught eight passes for 85 yards last season.	Joe Kemp, Sr.
TE	Brock Sanders	Jr.	Back injury kept him out of spring game.	Matt Marfisi, Fr.
LT	Pat Husain	So.	Gets his chance to start.	Mike Henry, So.
LG	Harris Howard*	Sr.	One of the team's most proven, versatile linemen.	Adam Skidmore, Fr.
C	Joey Ray	Sr.	Lots of experience; can he hold off Morgan?	Zach Morgan, Jr.*
RG	Emmanuel Aluko	Sr.	A converted defensive lineman.	Rio Mares, So.
RT	Eric Jones*	Jr.	Good experience last season.	Sean Donnelly, Fr.
K	Cairo Santos*	So.	Should be one of C-USA's best kickers.	Ryan Rome, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2010 stats: 195.5 ypg rushing (10th in C-USA/101st NCAA), 194.6 passing (1st/28th), 390.1 total defense (5th/74th), 37.2 ppg (9th/113th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Dezman Moses*	Sr.	Elite, athletic pass rusher who had six sacks in '10.	Devin Williams, So.
DT	Cedric Wilson	Sr.	Had a big spring; better against the run than the pass.	Shane Delery, So.
DT	Chris Asumnu*	Sr.	Will rotate heavily with Warmsley.	Julius Warmsley, So.
DE	Austen Jacks*	Jr.	Disciplined defender; good against both run and pass.	Josh Smith, Sr.
LB	Trent Mackey*	Jr.	Defense's leading tackler in 2010 — 124 stops.	Logan Hamilton, So.
LB	Darryl Farley*	Jr.	Is a smart player with good speed.	Zach Davis, So.
LB	Dominique Robertson	So.	Candidate for big production jump as sophomore.	Steve Funderburk, Fr.
CB.	Ryan Travis*	Jr.	Has great speed, good nose for the ball.	Alex Lauricella, Jr.
CB	Jordan Sullen	Jr.	Super athletic; he's a converted wide receiver.	Kendrell Washington, So.
SS	Taylor Echols	Sr.	This position battle will continue in the fall.	Kyle Davis, So.
FS	Shakiel Smith*	Jr.	Three interceptions in 2010 — tied for most on team.	Devon Walker, Jr.
P	Jonathan Ginsburgh*	So.	Bad spring put him in Bob Toledo's doghouse.	Cairo Santos, So.

*Returning Starter

UAB BLAZERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kim Helton | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tommy West** | **STADIUM: Legion Field (71,594)**

AT A GLANCE

2010:
4-8, 3-5 C-USA (5th, East)

COACH:
Neil Callaway—At UAB and overall: 15-33, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
17; 7 offense, 9 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Bryan Ellis, RB Pat Shed, OL Matt McCants, WR Patrick Hearn, LB Marvin Burdette, S Jamie Bender, S Chase Daniel, LB Lamanski Ware, CB T.J. Ballou

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Blazers will have an experienced offensive line, strong rushing attack and strong play at quarterback. There is a supply of experienced receivers on hand. Nine returning starters and a new defensive coordinator should make the defense a plus.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Defense has been a problem in recent years, but it doesn't appear to be a trouble spot this season. Making up for the loss of tight end Jeffrey Anderson and WR Frantrell Forrest could be problematic, as could finding a reliable placekicker.

KEY LOSSES:
TE Jeffrey Anderson, OL Greg Bulls, WR Frantrell Forrest, WR Mike Jones, DT D.J. Reese, DE Bryant Turner, PK Josh Zahn

OVERVIEW:
Defense and place-kicking were trouble spots last season, but the Blazers believe that won't be the case this season. Tommy West was brought in to run the defense, which returns nine starters, and UAB signed two kickers with good credentials to shore up the the hole at kicker. Offensively, UAB will be explosive behind quarterback Bryan Ellis. A bowl season is a reasonable possibility.

Despite Step Back, Blazers Primed for Progress

UAB took a step backward last season, at least in terms of wins and losses. After improving from two wins, to four and then to five in coach Neil Callaway's first three seasons, last year the Blazers posted a 4-8 record.

That's what is so ironic. The Blazers of last season looked like a better team and were more competitive than in previous years, making it all the more frustrating.

UAB started the season losing to FIU, 32-31, when a last-play field-goal attempt was blocked. That would prove to be a sticking point all season, as the Blazers lost 32-29 to Tennessee in double overtime and missed five field goals in the process.

"I think we've made progress," Callaway said at the end of spring practice.

"You look back to where we started and the numbers we were dealing with as much as anything. Creating your own work ethic and your own style is always an issue, but I think we've made progress, and with the limitations we've had to overcome I think we've done some good things."

One of the best things that came out of last year was the emergence of Bryan Ellis as the starting quarterback. After leading the Blazers to a comeback win over Troy in the third game of the season, Ellis started the rest of the way. He injected a spark into UAB's offense and finished the season throwing for 2,940 yards and 25 touchdowns.

The problem for UAB has typically been defense. The Blazers finished No. 104 nationally in pass defense, No. 80 in total defense and No. 95 in scoring defense. To that end, former UT-Chattanooga, Clemson and Memphis head coach Tommy West was hired as coordinator to overhaul the defense.

"As we all know, the bottom line is winning football games," Callaway said. "I do think we've made progress. We've just got to continue to get better."

OFFENSE

When Bryan Ellis took over as quarterback in the fourth game, the whole offense took off.

"I think the rest of the guys were happy that they were going to touch the ball more," said Ellis, who was not going to look to run the ball as much as his predecessors Joe Webb and David Isabelle, who were primarily running quarterbacks. "We spread it out a lot more."

"I am comfortable with Bryan," Callaway said.

"The one area Bryan's got to work on — and we've talked about it — is not throwing interceptions. There's a fine line there. You want to be courageous; you want to be bold and you have to take some risks, but the bottom line is you don't want to turn the ball over."

Pat Shed stepped up as a big-play back and led the team in rushing with 847 yards on 157 attempts. He was also the leading receiver coming out of the backfield with 47 catches for 471 yards and four receiving touchdowns to go along with his three rushing scores.

One of the biggest keys for the UAB offense this fall will be the line. Three seniors and two juniors came out of spring practice as starters. The three seniors have been starters and another returning starter is listed as a backup.

The projected starters are Darion Smith at center, Matt McCants and Chris Hubbard at the tackles, and Caleb Thomas and Terence Edge at the guards.

"I think we have the best offensive line in the conference," Ellis said.

Seven receivers caught double-digit passes for UAB last season, but four of those have moved on. That leaves UAB with some inexperience in the passing game, but well stocked with guys who have stepped up when needed in the clutch.

Three players who will be missed in the passing game are tight end Jeffrey Anderson, Frantrell Forrest and Mike Jones, who combined for 109 catches, 1,496 yards and 15 touchdowns. But Patrick Hearn is expected to be the leading receiver after grabbing 35 passes for 536 yards and four scores last season.

But the bottom line is UAB must produce more than four wins — and if past history is any indication, the offense will have to lead the way.

DEFENSE

Tommy West's assignment is to bolster a defense that let UAB down so many times in recent years. Seven teams scored 30 or more points against the Blazers last season.

In a league like Conference USA that boasts some of the most prolific quarterbacks in the country, if you can limit teams to less than 30 points, you have a chance to earn a bowl trip.

The exciting thing from West's perspective is that UAB has a ton of experience returning on that side of the ball. There are nine starters back, if safety Chase Daniel and linebacker Drew Luker return healthy and ready to play. Daniel looked ready in the spring, although Luker missed most of spring drills.

Only one starter is back on the line, but he's a good one. Elliott Henigan was a second-team all-conference choice after he had 55 tackles, 2.5 sacks and 15.5 tackles for loss. Deric Scott and Chris Walton likely will join Henigan on the line.

Linebacker should be a strength with Marvin Burdette and Daniel White leading the way. Luker, Lamanski Ware and Greg Irvin, who have all started in the past, join them.

The secondary, if it stays healthy, should be good with starters T.J. Ballou, Marquis Coleman, Jamie Bender and Daniel making up a good set of starters with veteran Terrell Springs ready to step in when needed.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Place-kicking was a disaster last season with the Blazers missing 10 of 17 field-goal attempts. To that end, UAB signed two kickers from Georgia who will vie for the starting job. Colin Anderson of Stone Mountain and Ty Long of Roswell have impressive credentials and should be up to the task.

Trey Ragland will be the punter for the third consecutive season. He averaged 42.0 yards per kick and put 26 of 55 punts inside the 20-yard line last season.

Pat Shed was the primary return man last season, returning 33 kickoffs and 12 punts. He averaged 22.4 yards on kickoffs and 5.8 on punts.

— Ben Cook

Bryant Ellis
Photo by Michael Wade

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2010 stats: 165.8 ypg rushing (6th in C-USA/59th in NCAA), 267 passing (6th/24th), 432.8 total offense (3rd/30th), 26.3 points per game (7th/60th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Bryan Ellis*	Sr.	Threw for 2,940 yards and 25 TDs last season.	Jonathan Perry, So.
RB	Pat Shed*	Sr.	Ran for 847 yards and caught 47 passes.	Greg Franklin, So.
WR	Nick Adams	Sr.	Sure-handed receiver; could be key.	Jamarcus Nelson, Fr.
WR	Patrick Hearn*	Jr.	Had 35 receptions for 536 yards, four TDs.	D. J. Vinson, Fr.
WR	Jackie Williams	So.	Caught 30 passes for 327 yards, three scores.	Jay Davis, Fr.
TE	Sam Accursio	Jr.	Has to fill the big shoes of Jeffrey Anderson.	Bud Pruitt, So.
LT	Matt McCants*	Sr.	First-team All-Conference USA.	Kaycee Ike, So.
LG	Caleb Thomas	Sr.	Experienced player on a veteran line.	Billy Autrey, So.
C	Darion Smith*	Sr.	Started all 12 games in 2010.	John Hix, Fr.
RG	Terence Edge*	Sr.	Five starts at RT, seven at RG.	Brian O'Leary, Fr.
RT	Chris Hubbard	Jr.	OL could be best in C-USA.	Greg Calhoun, Sr.*
K	Colin Anderson	Fr.	It's either/or between these young kickers.	Ty Long, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2010 stats: 150.6 ypg rushing (7th in C-USA/59th), 248.2 passing (8th/105th), 398.8 total defense (6th/80th), 31.6 points per game (7th/95th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Chris Walton	Fr.	Youngster ready to help out defense.	Jamie Onufrak, Fr.
DT	Deric Scott	So.	Promising tackle played in five games.	Adam Arthur, Sr.
DT	Elliott Henigan*	Sr.	Made 55 tackles, 15.5 TFL in 2010.	Cody Payne, Jr.
DE	Andrew Mahan	So.	Edged onto the first team in spring.	Connor Boyett, So.*
LB	Marvin Burdette*	Jr.	Led team with 114 tackles, eight for loss.	D.D. Autry, Jr.
LB	Lamanski Ware*	Sr.	15 tackles, one sack, two forced fumbles.	Daniel White, Jr.*
LB	Greg Irvin	Jr.	16 tackles, including one sack for 13 yards.	Desmond Warren, Fr.
CB	T.J. Ballou*	Sr.	Led team with three interceptions.	Terrell Springs, Sr.
CB	Marquis Coleman*	Sr.	14 career starts; five career INTs.	Cornelius Richards, Jr.
SS	Chase Daniel*	Sr.	When healthy, he's one of C-USA's best.	Ugonna Amarikwa, Sr.
FS	Jamie Bender*	Sr.	Second on team with 94 tackles, 73 solo.	Calvin Jones, So.
P	Trey Ragland*	Sr.	Averaged 42.0 yards in 2010, 42.8 in 2009.	Hunter Mullins, Fr.

*Returning Starter

UCF | KNIGHTS

C-USA rank: 1, East Record: 11-3 C-USA record: 7-1 (1st, East) Stadium: Bright House Networks Stadium (45,301)

By Paul Borden

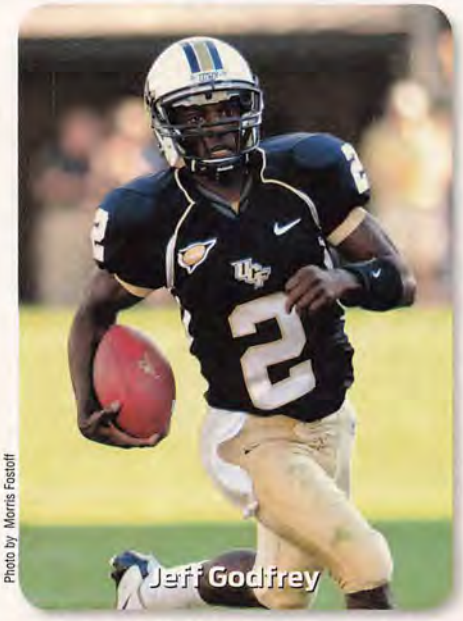


Photo by: Morris Fostoff

"You need leaders on this team. Like Coach said, you don't have to be a senior to be a leader."
— Sophomore QB Jeff Godfrey

KNIGHTS at a GLANCE

COACH: George O'Leary — At UCF: 45-44, 7 years
Overall: 97-77, 14 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Charlie Taaffe
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Skladany

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST BOWL:2010 Liberty Bowl
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 7 offense, 4 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Jeff Godfrey, TB Latavius Murray, TB Ronnie Weaver, TB Brynn Harvey, WR A.J. Guyton, DE Toby Jackson, CB Josh Robinson, FS Kemal Ishmael

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Running back is especially deep with Harvey back from a knee injury to team with Murray and Weaver, who combined to rush for 1,527 yards last year. Godfrey gives the Knights the threat of run or pass at quarterback. The defense is solid up front with both Jackson and DE Troy Davis able to get pressure on the passer.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Depth at wide receiver is somewhat questionable behind starters Guyton and Quincy McDuffie, and McDuffie needs to be more consistent. They need to come through to keep opposing defenses from stacking up against the run. Depth at linebacker also may be an issue.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Jeff Godfrey, who was a starter as a true freshman by the third game of last year, developed his passing through the season. He goes into his sophomore year as a truer dual-threat as a runner and passer.

The situation at running back couldn't be better. Junior Latavius Murray and senior Ronnie Weaver, who shared the starting role last year, will be joined by junior Brynn Harvey. Harvey sat out 2010 while recovering from a knee injury, but he was an All-Conference USA preseason pick.

Four starters return on the line, and Adam Nissley is a returning starter at tight end. At 6-6, 267, he's more of a blocker than a receiver.

The concern is at wide receiver. After fighting nagging injuries and missing one game in 2010, A.J. Guyton hopes to return to the form that saw him catch 44 passes as a sophomore in 2009. He had 28 catches last season.

Junior Quincy McDuffie has great speed but needs to be more consistent, and youngsters are going to have to provide depth.

DEFENSE

Juniors Toby Jackson and Troy Davis finished the spring on a strong note and look to give the Knights two solid pass rushers at end. The Knights also are hoping to get back starter Darius Nall, who sat out the spring for non-medical related reasons.

The Knights also are solid at tackle with sophomores Victor Gray and E.J. Dunston. Gray started last year, and Dunston played in 11 games as a true freshman.

Senior Josh Linam is a returning starter at linebacker, and the find of the spring was Ray Shipman. The former Florida Gator basketball player emerged at the No. 1 spot on the strong side. Developing depth will be the key throughout the fall.

The secondary looks to be a real strength. Junior Josh Robinson showed his ability as a cover corner with his play against Georgia's A.J. Green in UCF's Liberty Bowl win. He and junior free safety Kemal Ishmael each had two interceptions last year.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior kicker Nick Cattoi had an erratic 2010 season (11 of 19 on field goals attempts) but had a productive spring. He will face a challenge in the fall from incoming freshman Shawn Moffitt, who plans to walk-on. Senior David Bohner, who had eight attempts last season (37.6-yard average), and sophomore Steven Faucher will compete for the punting job.

McDuffie (32.2 -yard average on kickoffs) and Josh Robinson (punts) were the primary returners last year.

OVERVIEW

UCF is primed for another Conference USA title run with an offense that has the potential to be one of the most productive in the league if the wide receivers come through. The defense might take a step back from the unit that held foes to just 315 yards a game, but it has the potential to be strong against the pass, a good trait to have in a pass-happy league.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Toby Jackson: An outstanding pass rusher, the junior college transfer was the MVP in Navarro College's victory over Butler CC in last year's national junior college championship game. "He has all of the skills that you are looking for with a guy like him," coach George O'Leary said.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**2**	**Jeff Godfrey***	**5-11**	**182**	**So.**
TB	28	Latavius Murray	6-3	225	Jr.
FB	32	Billy Giovanetti	5-11	234	Jr.
WR	14	Quincy McDuffie	5-10	175	Jr.
WR	**3**	**A.J. Guyton***	**5-11**	**198**	**Sr.**
TE	**88**	**Adam Nissley***	**6-6**	**267**	**Sr.**
LT	70	Chris Martin	6-5	294	So.
LG	**65**	**Cliff McCray***	**6-2**	**305**	**Sr.**
C	**73**	**Jordan Rae***	**6-2**	**272**	**Jr.**
RG	**68**	**Theo Goins***	**6-4**	**316**	**Jr.**
RT	**77**	**Nick Pieschel***	**6-7**	**306**	**Sr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	48	Toby Jackson	6-5	259	Jr.
DT	**91**	**Victor Gray***	**6-4**	**256**	**So.**
DT	95	E.J. Dunston	6-2	302	So.
DE	58	Troy Davis	6-2	256	Jr.
LB	46	Ray Shipman	6-5	237	Jr.
LB	**50**	**Josh Linam***	**6-3**	**237**	**Sr.**
LB	27	Jonathan Davis	5-9	199	Jr.
CB	**20**	**Josh Robinson***	**5-10**	**192**	**Jr.**
CB	19	A.J. Bouye	6-0	179	Jr.
SS	26	Clayton Geathers	6-3	200	Fr.
FS	**18**	**Kemal Ishmael***	**5-11**	**211**	**Jr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**16**	**Nick Cattoi***	**6-5**	**224**	**Sr.**
P	98	David Bohner	6-0	179	Sr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Sept. 10	BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 17	at Florida International
Sept. 23	at BYU
Oct. 8	MARSHALL
Oct. 15	at SMU
Oct. 22	at UAB
Oct. 29	MEMPHIS
Nov. 5	TULSA
Nov. 12	at Southern Miss
Nov. 19	at East Carolina
Nov. 26	UTEP

2010 RESULTS

W	SOUTH DAKOTA	38-7
L	NC STATE	21-28
W	at Buffalo	24-10
L	at Kansas State	13-17
W	UAB	42-7
W	at Marshall	35-14
W	RICE	41-14
W	EAST CAROLINA	49-35
W	at Houston	40-33
L	SOUTHERN MISS	21-31
W	at Tulane	61-14
W	at Memphis	37-17
W	SMU	17-7
	Liberty Bowl	
W	vs. Georgia	10-6

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.1	31
Rushing	187.6	26
Passing	186.4	87
Total	374.0	65
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.1	8
Rushing	108.4	8
Passing	207.0	41
Total	315.4	15
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.29	40

LOUISVILLE CARDINALS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Sanford **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Vance Bedford** **STADIUM: Papa John's Cardinal Stadium:42,000**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
7-6 overall, 3-4 Big East (T-5th)

COACH:
Charlie Strong — At Louisville and overall: 7-6, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
13; 4 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Victor Anderson, RB Jeremy Wright, WR Josh Bellamy, DE B.J. Butler, LB Dexter Heyman, SS Shenard Holton, FS Hakeem Smith

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Skill players at receiver and running back could potentially make the Cards explosive. Bellamy has the tools to be one of the league's best. Defensively, U of L returns a solid front seven, particularly a line that features versatile sophomore B.J. Butler.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Cards are breaking in two new — and inexperienced — starters at cornerback. It could prove to be the weak link on an otherwise strong defense. The offensive line also has to work four new starters into the lineup. With a new starting quarterback and Strong's dedication to running the ball, the line likely will dictate how effective the Cards can be.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Adam Froman, RB Bilal Powell, WR Doug Beaumont, TE Cameron Graham, CB Johnny Patrick, OT Byron Stingily, LB Brandon Heath

OVERVIEW:
Strong raised expectations in a hurry after taking Louisville to its first bowl game since 2006 last season. But the second-year coach faces a bigger challenge after losing 25 seniors from last year's team. With so many young players in key positions — and virtually an entirely new offensive makeup — the Cards are probably a year away from contending for the Big East title. But a second straight bowl trip should be in the forecast.

A Strong Start, But Year Two Won't Be Easy

With statues to college football icons growing in popularity down South, Louisville fans might need to get their bronze ready if coach Charlie Strong continues at this pace.

Strong wiped away three straight non-winning seasons with a 7-6 record, topped by the Cardinals' first bowl appearance and victory since the 2006 season. He continued the buzz by signing arguably the program's best recruiting class ... ever.

Onward and upward?

He doesn't mind raising expectations, but there is a lot of work to do.

"We're starting all over again and we're starting from scratch," Strong said. "It's a new team; it's a new challenge; it's a new expectation. This team has to find its own identity."

OFFENSE

Certainly, all eyes will be on a new starting quarterback. But whether former walk-on and hometown hero Will Stein fends off touted freshman Teddy Bridgewater could be irrelevant if the line doesn't come together.

The line breaks in four new starters and lost a total of seven seniors from last season's rotation. Center Mario Benavides is the lone returning starter — and he sat out spring practice while rehabbing from shoulder surgery. Junior Alex Kupper and senior Ryan Kessling have solid experience.

Redshirt freshman Jake Smith and senior Hector Hernandez should have major roles in the rotation. Hernandez, who played sparingly last season, is most likely to start at left tackle.

Stein, who has outlasted eight quarterbacks who have come through the program since his freshman year, started two games in 2009. The coaching staff has no reservations of playing the 5-10 junior.

"Stein knows the offense. He's been here. He may not be very tall, but you love his toughness and he's going to compete," Strong said. "I'll tell you right now, I'm comfortable with Stein."

Some observers think Bridgewater, a Miami native who enrolled in January, could supplant Stein by midseason if the offense staggers. But Stein is the only one of three quarterbacks on the roster who has completed a pass.

"I don't want to come out here with the expectation that I am No. 1. I think I have to earn it," Stein said. "At the same time, in my mind I feel like I can really help this team out this year."

Strong continually says he only wants his quarterbacks to manage the game. The Cards have enough playmakers to take care of the rest.

Senior running back Victor Anderson is healthy and ready to regain the form that led him to rush for 1,000 yards as a freshman. Jeremy Wright proved to be a budding star with his 98 yards and two touchdowns in his lone start at Syracuse.

The Cards are loaded at receiver, led by the tandem of senior Josh Bellamy and junior Andrell Smith. Adding freshmen Eli Rogers and DeVante Parker to the mix allowed them to experiment with promising freshman Charles Gaines at cornerback.

DEFENSE

The biggest losses on defense are at cornerback, where Johnny Patrick and Bobby Burns started every game last season. Patrick was the team's top cover man. A handful of players with limited experience, including Darius Ashley and Anthony Conner, will attempt to

become the next pair of starters.

Ashley moved from running back to corner last year and was impressive in nickel situations. He had two interceptions and three sacks, but he missed spring practice while rehabbing a shoulder injury.

"I can't wait to get him back," defensive coordinator Vance Bedford said. "You look at Darius, he was a great nickel back for us. He had some sacks, a couple interceptions. He brings more quickness and speed to the table, and that's a good thing for us."

Conner started two games in 2009, but missed last season with a torn ACL in his right knee. He'll join Titus Teague and Preston Pace in a battle for the other starting spot.

Their secondary has arguably the best safety tandem in the Big East. Sophomore Hakeem Smith and junior Shenard Holton were the Cards' top two tacklers from last season. Smith was named the league's Rookie of the Year.

"They know what they're doing back there. Their communication makes it easier for me to come in and know what to do," Conner said. "I'm glad I have them back there."

The front seven has the potential to be dominating enough to mask any problems the cornerbacks might have in the passing game.

Last season, 19.5 of the Cards' 39 sacks came from their front four. That number should increase substantially this season with more experience. B.J. Butler, Brandon Dunn and Roy Philon are ready for bigger roles after getting their first taste of playing time as freshmen last season.

The play of that trio allows Greg Scruggs to move back to defensive end after spending last year as an interior lineman.

Louisville will also miss linebacker Brandon Heath, considered the heart of the defense, but Dexter Heyman is ready to assume his leadership role. Heyman, Daniel Brown and Preston Brown give the Cardinals three playmakers at linebacker.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Special teams went from being a sore spot under Steve Kragthorpe to a big part of the Cards' success last season. Wright's 95-yard kickoff return against Southern Mississippi changed the momentum of the game and led to their Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl win. Bellamy should boost the punt return game as well.

Chris Philphott, who handled kicking and punting duties last season, showed his improving leg strength with 16 touchbacks on kickoffs, and he even had a 73-yard punt.

— C.L. Brown

Hakeem Smith
Photo by David Durochik / Sportpics

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Will Stein	Jr.	Undersized at 5-10, but not under-skilled.	Teddy Bridgewater So.
RB	Victor Anderson	Sr.	Needs to return to freshman form.	Jeremy Wright So.
WR	Josh Bellamy*	Sr.	Primed for a monster season.	Charles Gaines, Fr.
WR	Andrell Smith*	Jr.	Most physically gifted of Cards receivers.	Jarrett Davis, So.
WR	Stephan Robinson	Fr.	Making transition from the scout team to starter.	Scott Radcliff, Jr.
TE	Josh Chichester*	Sr.	Tied for most TDs with five; must get over drops.	Stephon Ball, Jr.
LT	Hector Hernandez	Sr.	Biggest role of newcomers, protecting blindside.	Chris Acosta, Fr.
LG	Kamran Joyer	So.	Hopes to rebound after injury-riddle spring.	John Clark, Sr.
C	Mario Benavides*	Jr.	Missed all of spring rehabbing shoulder injury.	Alex Kupper, Jr.
RG	Alex Kupper	Jr.	Arguably the team's most versatile lineman.	Jake Smith, Fr.
RT	Ryan Kessling	Sr.	Displayed great leadership in spring.	Zach Perkins, So.
K	Chris Philpott*	Sr.	Tied school record with four FGs in a game.	Andrew Fletcher, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	B.J. Butler*	So.	Versatile lineman, can also drop to linebacker.	Malcolm Mitchell, So.
DT	Brandon Dunn*	So.	Came on strong in latter part of season.	Randy Salmon, Jr.
NT	Roy Philon	So.	Should be the anchor of developing line.	Jamaine Brooks, Fr.
DE	Greg Scruggs	Sr.	Moved back to end after playing tackle.	William Savoy, Sr.*
LB	Daniel Brown*	Jr.	Leading tackler among returning linebackers.	Brandon Golson, Fr.
LB	Dexter Heyman*	Sr.	Should blossom in leadership position.	Preston Brown, So.
LB	Deon Rogers	So.	Played mainly special teams last season.	Tyon Dixon, So.
CB	Anthony Conner	Sr.	Missed last season with a torn ACL.	Preston Pace, Sr.
CB	Darius Ashley	Jr.	Making jump from nickel back to starter.	Titus Teague, So.
SS	Hakeem Smith*	So.	Big East Rookie of the Year has a big future.	Champ Lee, So.
FS	Shenard Holton*	Jr.	Quietly, the backbone of entire defense.	Mike Evans, Sr.
P	Chris Philpott*	Sr.	Will again handle both kicking and punting.	Josh Bleser, Sr.

*Returning Starter

CARDINALS RECRUITING 2011

rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Teddy Bridgewater	QB	6-3	180	✪✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Northwestern

Rivals.com rated No. 2 dual-threat quarterback nationally and No. 16 player in Florida… Played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl… As a senior, had 2,606 yards passing and 22 touchdowns… Had 223 yards rushing and eight touchdowns… Had 2,546 yards passing and 32 touchdowns as a junior.

Jamon Brown	DT	6-4	300	✪✪✪	Fern Creek	Fern Creek

Ranked No. 58 tackle nationally by Rivals.com… *Orlando Sentinel* All-Southern… Three-year starter on defense and two-year starter on offense… Had 25 career tackles for loss, including 12 as a senior.

Bryant Dubose	DE	6-4	240	✪✪✪	Oakland Park, FL	Northeast

Rivals.com rated No. 24 strongside defensive end nationally and No. 64 player in Florida… As a senior, had 60 tackles and 11 quarterback sacks… Had 55 tackles, 11 quarterback sacks and three fumbles caused as a junior.

Aaron Epps	OT	6-7	245	✪✪✪	Tucker, GA	Tucker

Helped team to state semifinals as a senior… Played tight end as a junior… Gave up football for two years to concentrate on basketball.

Terrell Floyd	CB	5-10	170	✪✪✪	Fort Pierce, FL	Port St. Lucie

Rivals.com rated No. 99 player in Florida… As a senior, had more than 50 tackles and one interception… Had 70 tackles, four interceptions and two fumbles recovered as a junior.

Charles Gaines	WR	5-11	170	✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Central

Ranked No. 43 wide receiver nationally and No. 70 player in Florida by Rivals.com… All-Dade County… Helped team to state championship… Averaged more than 18 yards per reception during career… Had 24 receptions for 440 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior.

Jarvis Giles	WR	5-11	187	✪✪✪	Tampa, FL	South Carolina

Transfer from South Carolina, had 277 yards rushing as a freshman, averaging 5.3 yards per carry… Rivals.com rated No. 22 player in Florida in high school… Participated in Under Armour All-American Game… Had more than 1,500 yards rushing as a senior… As a junior, had 1,478 yards rushing and 20 touchdowns.

Brandon Golson	OLB	6-2	208	✪✪✪	St. Matthews, SC	Fork Union Military

Ranked No. 22 player in South Carolina by Rivals.com… All-Area in 2009… As a senior, had 113 tackles, including 30 quarterback sacks and four fumbles caused… Had 78 tackles, including 18 quarterback sacks as a junior.

Jalen Harrington	S	6-3	215	✪✪✪	Fern Creek	Fern Creek

District Player of the Year… Played linebacker, safety, running back and quarterback… Had 38 tackles in six games before a season-ending hand injury as a junior.

Gerod Holliman	S	6-0	185	✪✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Southridge

Originally committed to Ole Miss… Ranked No. 4 safety nationally by Rivals.com… Played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl… Had 12 interceptions, returning five for touchdowns, as a senior… As a junior, had 80 tackles, including 25 tackles for loss, six quarterback sacks, four interceptions and scored two defensive touchdowns.

Andrew Johnson	CB	5-9	180	✪✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Southridge

Originally committed to Ole Miss… Rivals.com rated No. 23 cornerback nationally and No. 41 player in Florida… As a senior, had more than 2,500 all-purpose yards and scored 19 touchdowns… Had three interceptions… Had 56 tackles and four quarterback sacks as a junior.

Ryan Mack	OT	6-6	315	✪✪✪	Memphis, TN	Wooddale

Ranked No. 60 offensive tackle nationally and No. 9 player in Tennessee by Rivals.com… *Knoxville News* Sentinel rated No. 9 player in Tennessee.

John Miller	OG	6-3	295	✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Central

All-Dade County… Helped team to state championship.

Deiontrez Mount	DE	6-5	205	✪✪✪	Fort Walton Beach, FL	Fort Walton Beach

Rivals.com rated No. 34 weakside defensive end nationally… As a senior, had 54 tackles, including 5.5 quarterback sacks… State qualifier in 110-meter hurdles.

DeVante Parker	WR	6-3	185	✪✪✪	Louisville	Ballard

Ranked No. 77 wide receiver nationally and No. 5 player in Kentucky by Rivals.com… Two-time All-State… Had 68 receptions for 1,793 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior… As a junior, had 73 receptions for 1,438 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Calvin Pryor	S	6-2	200	✪✪✪	Port St. Joe, FL	Port St. Joe

Rivals.com rated No. 31 safety nationally and No. 64 player in Florida… Second-team All-State running back… Had more than 1,500 yards rushing and 17 touchdowns as a junior… Had more than 50 tackles… Averaged 12 points per game as a junior point guard for the basketball team.

Jermaine Reve	S	6-0	180	✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Northwestern

Originally committed to Central Florida… *Orlando Sentinel* rated No. 73 player in Florida… Second-team All-Dade County… As a senior, had 70 tackles, two fumbles recovered and one interception.

Eli Rogers	WR	5-10	180	✪✪✪✪	Miami, FL	Northwestern

Originally committed to Miami (Fla.)… Ranked No. 35 wide receiver nationally and No. 96 player in Florida by Rivals.com… Played in the Under Armour All-American Game… Had 59 receptions for 691 yards and three touchdowns as a senior… As a junior, had 35 receptions for 551 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Mike Romano	C	6-4	270	✪✪✪	Port St. Lucie, FL	Treasure Coast

Played in Florida North/South All-Star Game… Helped team to district championship as a junior.

John Wallace	K	5-10	185	✪✪	Cecilia	Central Hardin

Second-team All-State as a punter… As a senior, made 11 of 14 field goals attempted with a 50-yarder as his longest… Averaged 42.4 yards on punts and put 90 percent of kickoffs into the end zone… Made 32 of 40 career field goals attempted.

A LOOK AT THE CARDINALS

RESULTS

	7-6, 3-4	
L	KENTUCKY	16-23
W	EASTERN KENTUCKY	23-13
L	at Oregon State	28-35
W	at Arkansas State	34-24
W	MEMPHIS	56-0
L	CINCINNATI	27-35
W	CONNECTICUT	26-0
L	at Pittsburgh	3-20
W	at Syracuse	28-20
L	SOUTH FLORIDA (OT)	21-24
L	West Virginia	10-17
W	at Rutgers	40-13
	St. Petersburg Bowl	
W	vs. Southern Miss	31-28

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD
A. Froman	132	218	4	60.6	1633	11
J. Burke	75	129	3	58.1	790	10

RUSHING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
B. Powell	229	1405	6.1	11	85
J. Wright	59	327	5.5	4	64
V. Anderson	64	286	4.5	0	20

RECEIVING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
D. Beaumont	41	440	10.7	1	44
C. Graham	40	470	11.8	5	39
J. Bellamy	29	401	13.8	5	44

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: H. Smith 88, S. Holton 74, B. Heath 70
Tackles for loss: R. Gnat 10.5, D. Brown 10, B. Heath 8.5
Sacks: R. Gnat 9, M. Tatum 4.5, four tied with 3
Interceptions: J. Patrick 5, D. Ashley 2, two tied with 1

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'10 Record
Sept. 1	MURRAY STATE	6-5
Sept. 9	FIU	7-6
Sept. 17	at Kentucky	6-7
Oct. 1	MARSHALL	5-7
Oct. 8	at North Carolina	8-5
Oct. 15	at Cincinnati	4-8
Oct. 21	RUTGERS	4-8
Oct. 29	SYRACUSE	8-5
Nov. 5	at West Virginia	9-4
Nov. 12	PITTSBURGH	8-5
Nov. 19	at Connecticut	8-5
Nov. 25	at USF	8-5

PICKING **THE SUN BELT**

Wither the Trojans? FIU will give it another shot

Turns out Troy isn't the only tough out in the Sun Belt.

Florida International — which prefers to go by the initials FIU — took a piece of last year's conference championship away from the Trojans, and with 16 starters back, including conference Player of the Year T.Y. Hilton, the Panthers will now make a run for a second consecutive title.

It's not exactly how coach Mario Cristobal likes to view it, but the Panthers hadn't had a winning season until last year and essentially are going from the hunter to the hunted.

Staying power is something the Panthers must develop if they are to be more than a one-and-done story.

"We're never really concerned with the perception of anyone outside the walls of our building," Cristobal said. "We will continue along the lines of having the mentality of the 'hunter.'

"We are not good enough in any way shape or form to think we should be the 'hunted' and to be crowned before the season even begins."

It's hard to argue as the Sun Belt appears to essentially be a four-team race.

Troy, FIU, Arkansas State and Louisiana-Monroe all have the advantage of returning experienced quarterbacks. Troy has sophomore Corey Robinson; FIU senior Wes Carroll is back; Arkansas State leans on junior Ryan Aplin; sophomore Kolton Browning will be under center again for the Warhawks.

Troy gets a slight nod from *Lindy's*, though a tie would surprise nobody.

It very easily could have been a three-way tie last year had Arkansas State not lost to also-rans Louisiana and Western Kentucky. The Red Wolves return 16 starters from the team that finished two games back of the leaders.

Louisiana-Monroe, which tied Arkansas State for fourth, returns 19 starters, but faces a demanding early schedule. The Warhawks have trips to Florida State, TCU and Iowa in the first four weeks. Their health coming out of that meat grinder could tell their Sun Belt story.

Of the remaining five teams, Middle Tennessee and Florida Atlantic have the best shot at moving into the upper echelon. Both are looking to replace quarterbacks, however, which always adds mystery.

As for the final three, coaches Mark Hudspeth at Louisiana and Dan McCarney at North Texas are in their first seasons, and Willie Taggart is in just his second at Western Kentucky.

They are at least a year or two away from making the kind of jump FIU did from 2009 to 2010.

— Paul Borden

Sun Belt Conference Picks

	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. Troy	QB Corey Robinson will challenge for all-conference honors; playmakers abound on defense.	Wide receivers are unproven, and there are holes in the offensive line.	It's getting routine to pencil in Troy at the top. Odds are, this is going to be right again.
2. Florida Int'l.	Veterans returning who are still riding a high from last year's bowl win.	Aren't catching anybody by surprise this season.	FIU has the potential to grab a share of the title again ... or even win it outright.
3. Arkansas State	All-Sun Belt QB Ryan Aplin leads an abundance of talent at the skill positions.	Looking for four new starters on the offensive line.	Have the talent to win it all if they can avoid losing "the little ones."
4. UL-Monroe	New coach Todd Berry takes control of a team that has no shortage of athletes.	The running game, inconsistent at best in 2010, must take a huge step up.	If they can survive September, they will be a factor in the league race.
5. Middle Tennessee	A veteran interior line should help ease the transition to life after Dwight Dasher.	The defense, which struggled stopping the run last year, is undergoing a major overhaul.	A third straight bowl appearance seems unlikely with all the personnel losses on defense.
6. Florida Atlantic	The return of five starters up front should give anemic running game a boost.	New quarterback, new defensive scheme (3-4) leave key issues unsettled.	The Owls need all the breaks to fall their way to move up in the standings.
7. Louisiana	The Cajuns have one of the top tight ends in the country in senior Ladarius Green.	Lack of depth, which led to second-half woes last year, remains a big problem.	The schedule is more manageable, but it's hard to see a huge jump.
8. North Texas	Looks to have found an answer at quarterback in sophomore Derek Thompson.	Both lines are riddled with questions, but especially on offense.	It's going to take first-year coach Dan McCarney another year or two to get things right.
9. Western Kentucky	The Hilltoppers welcome back 19 starters, including All-Sun Belt RB Bobby Rainey.	Most of those veterans have been part of only two wins in the past two years.	The offense has a little pop, but there are too many liabilities to overcome.

Lindy's 2011 ALL-Sun Belt Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Ryan Aplin	Jr.	Arkansas State
RB	Lance Dunbar	Sr.	North Texas
RB	Bobby Rainey	Sr.	Western Kentucky
WR	Dwayne Frampton	Sr.	Arkansas State
WR	Luther Ambrose	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
TE	Ladarius Green	Sr.	Louisiana
C	Tom Castilaw	Sr.	Arkansas State
OL	James Brown	Sr.	Troy
OL	Caylin Hauptmann	Jr.	FIU
OL	Michael Williams	Sr.	Middle Tennessee
OL	Kyle Wilborn	Jr.	Troy
AP	T.Y. Hilton	Sr.	FIU
K	Alan Gendreau	Sr.	Middle Tennessee

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Jonathan Massaquoi	Jr.	Troy
DL	Tourek Williams	Jr.	FIU
DL	Dorvus Woods	Sr.	Arkansas State
DL	Kevin Cyrille	Sr.	Florida Atlantic
LB	Demario Davis	Sr.	Arkansas State
LB	Xavier Lamb	Sr.	Troy
LB	Cameron Blakes	Jr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DB	Dwight Bentley	Sr.	Louisiana
DB	Jimmie Anderson	Sr.	Troy
DB	Marcus Bartels	Sr.	Florida Atlantic
DB	Jonathan Cyprien	Jr.	FIU
P	Mickey Groody	Sr.	Florida Atlantic

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	Corey Robinson	So.	Troy
RB	Darriet Perry	Sr.	FIU
RB	Shawn Southward	Jr.	Troy
WR	Allen Muse	Jr.	Arkansas State
WR	Darius Carey	Jr.	North Texas
TE	Jack Doyle	Jr.	Western Kentucky
C	Ryan McCaul	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
OL	Adam Smith	Jr.	Western Kentucky
OL	Sam McRoy	Sr.	Florida Atlantic
OL	Giancarlo Revilla	Jr.	FIU
OL	Leonardo Bates	Jr.	Louisiana
AP	Willie McNeal	So.	Western Kentucky
K	Jack Griffin	Jr.	FIU

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

DL	Ken Dorsey	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DL	Quanterus Smith	Jr.	Western Kentucky
DL	Brandon Joiner	Sr.	Arkansas State
DL	Isame Faciane	So.	FIU
LB	Devon Lewis-Buchanan	Sr.	Louisiana
LB	Cory Henry	So.	Florida Atlantic
LB	Winston Fraser	Jr.	FIU
DB	Darius Prelow	Sr.	Louisiana-Monroe
DB	Royce Hill	Sr.	North Texas
DB	Darron Edwards	Sr.	Arkansas State
DB	Kelcie McCray	Sr.	Arkansas State
P	Josh Davis	So.	Middle Tennessee

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 3	Troy at Clemson
Sept. 3	Middle Tennessee at Purdue
Sept. 9	FIU at Louisville
Sept. 10	Georgia Tech at Middle Tennessee
Sept. 17	UCF at FIU
Sept. 17	Troy at Arkansas
Sept. 24	Middle Tennessee at Troy
Oct. 1	Duke at FIU
Oct. 15	Louisiana-Monroe at Troy
Oct. 25	Troy at FIU
Nov. 5	Louisiana-Monroe at Louisiana
Nov. 12	Florida Atlantic at FIU
Nov. 19	Arkansas State at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 26	FIU at Middle Tennessee
Dec. 3	Troy at Arkansas State

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Sun Belt #1
New Orleans Bowl vs. Conference USA

Sun Belt #2
GoDaddy.com vs. MAC

Sun Belt #3
Little Caesars Pizza Bowl vs. MAC
(if Big Ten team is not available)

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. T.Y. Hilton	WR	Sr.	FIU	Big-play receiver is threat as a return man.
2. Ladarius Green	TE	Sr.	Louisiana	A top receiving tight end with 98 career catches.
3. Jonathan Massaquoi	DE	Jr.	Troy	Able to spend time in opposition's backfield.
4. Lance Dunbar	RB	Sr.	North Texas	Packs a big punch in a small (5-9, 203) package.
5. Ken Dorsey	DE	Sr.	ULM	Pass rushing skills may make up for lack of height (6-0).
6. Caylin Hauptmann	OT	Sr.	FIU	Has pro size (6-7, 311) but needs to be more disciplined.
7. Kevin Cyrille	DE	Sr.	FL Atlantic	A disruptive force anchoring an improved D-line.
8. Bobby Rainey	RB	Sr.	W. Kentucky	A durable producer with an offense that struggles.
9. Alfred Morris	RB	Sr.	FL Atlantic	Productive runner who is an effective receiver as well.
10. James Brown	OT	Sr.	Troy	At 6-4, 329, his size is a big asset.

Most Valuable Player	Offensive Player of the Year	Defensive Player of the Year	Newcomer of the Year
T.Y. Hilton WR, FIU	Bobby Rainey RB, Western Kentucky	Jonathan Massaquoi, DE, Troy	Jordan Hunt LB, FIU

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	Corey Robinson	Troy
Strongest Arm	Wes Carroll	FIU
Best Scrambler	Ryan Aplin	Arkansas State
Coolest in Clutch	Ryan Aplin	Arkansas State
Toughest to Bring Down	Bobby Rainey	Western Kentucky
Best Hands	Ladarius Green	Louisiana
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	T.Y. Hilton	FIU
Best Pass Blocker	Caylin Hauptmann	FIU
Best Pass Rusher	Jonathan Massaquoi	Troy
Best Cover Corner	Dwight Bentley	ULM
Special Teams Demon	T.Y. Hilton	FIU

ARKANSAS STATE | RED WOLVES

Sun Belt rank: 3 Record: 4-8 Sun Belt record: 4-4 (T-4th) Stadium: ASU Stadium (30,406)

By Paul Borden

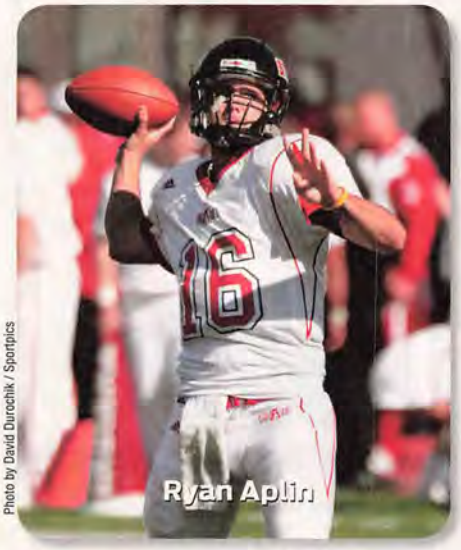


Photo by David Durochik / Sportpics

"I love the competitive spirit of our kids."

— Coach Hugh Freeze

RED WOLVES at a GLANCE

COACH: Hugh Freeze — At Arkansas State, 1st year
Overall: 20-5, 2 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Grant Heard (passing), Darren Hiller (running)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dave Wommack

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2005
LAST BOWL: 2005, New Orleans
RETURNING STARTERS: 16; 7 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Ryan Aplin, WR Dwayne Frampton, WR Allen Muse, RB Derek Lawson, C Tom Castilaw, DE Dorvus Woods, LB Demario Davis, SS Kelcie McCray

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Aplin was first-team All-Sun Belt last year and is an accurate passer who has three of his top four targets back. The running game looks to be in good hands with the return of Lawson, plus Aplin is a running threat. The secondary and ends look to be the strengths of the defense.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The offensive line will have four new starters, and that could hamper the consistency on offense, especially early on. The Wolves had trouble stopping the run a year ago, giving up more than 206 yards a game, but they hope some new pieces yield better results.

OFFENSE

Arkansas State is set at the skill positions. Junior Ryan Aplin is back at quarterback, and veterans return at running back and receiver.

How productive those veterans are comes down to how quickly the offensive line develops. The Red Wolves lose four starters from an offense that produced 403 yards a game — and they are all from the line.

It would have been five, but senior center Tom Castilaw was granted a sixth year of eligibility and returns to anchor the middle.

Aplin was first-team All-Sun Belt after throwing for nearly 3,000 yards and completing 61.5 percent of his passes. He also rushed for 477 yards, second-best on the team.

In addition to leading rusher Derek Lawson (500 yards on just 105 carries), the Red Wolves also return senior Jermaine Robertson (348 on 69 carries) and Sirgregory Thornton (258 on 38 carries). Lawson has averaged 5.6 yards per carry in his three seasons.

Three of the top four receivers return, led by senior Dwayne Frampton (69 catches, 738 yards). Also back are juniors Allen Muse (42 catches, 635 yards) and Taylor Stockemer (34-560).

DEFENSE

The Red Wolves welcome back seven starters on defense, but two of the losses leave big gaps to fill.

Linebacker Javon McKinnon led the team in tackles (95) and was second-team all-conference. First-team All-Sun Belt safety M.D. Jennings was No. 2 in tackles (84) and led in interceptions with three.

Senior strong safety Kelcie McCray is the leading returning stopper (79 tackles, two interceptions). He and cornerback Darron Edwards are returning starters. Junior Tausean Holmes had six starts last year as a nickel back.

Senior Demario Davis is an all-conference candidate at linebacker. He had two interceptions to go along with his 63 tackles. Junior Nick Nelms mans the other spot in the 4-2-5 scheme.

The Wolves are so deep at defensive end that returning starter Justin Robertson (three sacks) wasn't on the two-deep coming out of spring after contending with injuries.

Seniors Dorvus Woods, who also plays inside up front, and Brandon Joiner will anchor the ends. Woods was second-team all conference in 2010. He had three sacks, Joiner four.

Sophomores Amos Draper and Ryan Carrethers are ticketed to start at tackle and nose guard, respectively.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomores Brian Davis and Bobby Zalud will carry their competition for kicking duties into the fall. Davis had the advantage last year, going six of eight on field goal attempts to Zalud's 6-of-13 effort. Senior Neely Sullivent is the incumbent punter (40.7-yard average). Senior Roderick Hall (8.2 yards on punt returns, 23.1 on kickoffs) and Frampton will handle return chores.

OVERVIEW

If the offensive line develops, Arkansas State has the experience to contend in the conference. There will be little period of adjustment to new coach Hugh Freeze and his philosophy because Freeze served as offensive coordinator in 2010. The Wolves have early road tests (Illinois and Virginia Tech), but otherwise the schedule seems manageable.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Josh Jarboe: A junior college transfer, Jarboe was a four-star recruit out of high school when he signed with Oklahoma. He had 42 catches for Northeast Mississippi Community College last year and brings speed to the position.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**16**	**Ryan Aplin***	**6-1**	**205**	**Jr.**
RB	**22**	**Derek Lawson***	**5-11**	**210**	**Sr.**
WR	**9**	**Dwayne Frampton***	**5-9**	**180**	**Sr.**
WR	**2**	**Taylor Stockemer***	**6-4**	**210**	**Jr.**
WR	**17**	**Allen Muse***	**6-4**	**215**	**Jr.**
TE	**85**	**Kedric Murry***	**6-3**	**265**	**Jr.**
LT	70	Delano Moore	6-5	305	Sr.
LG	62	Alex Kautai	6-2	305	Sr.
C	**73**	**Tom Castilaw***	**6-3**	**280**	**Sr.**
RG	63	Cliff Mitchell	6-5	305	So.
RT	74	Zack McKnight	6-4	300	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**99**	**Brandon Joiner***	**6-3**	**255**	**Sr.**
DT	97	Amos Draper	6-3	270	So.
NG	65	Ryan Carrethers	6-2	310	So.
DE	**92**	**Dorvus Woods***	**6-3**	**265**	**Sr.**
LB	23	Demario Davis	6-3	230	Sr.
LB	53	Nick Nelms	5-11	225	Jr.
NB	**24**	**Tausean Holmes***	**5-10**	**190**	**Jr.**
CB	29	Darryl Feemster	5-11	185	Sr.
CB	**1**	**Darron Edwards***	**5-11**	**175**	**Sr.**
SS	**21**	**Kelcie McCray***	**6-2**	**195**	**Sr.**
FS	4	Jaquan Kilcrease	6-2	200	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**89**	**Brian Davis***	**5-11**	**160**	**So.**
P	**15**	**Neely Sullivent***	**6-0**	**190**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Illinois
Sept. 10	MEMPHIS
Sept. 17	at Virginia Tech
Sept. 24	CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Oct. 1	at Western Kentucky
Oct. 8	at ULM
Oct. 18	FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Oct. 29	NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 5	at Florida Atlantic
Nov. 12	LOUISIANA
Nov. 19	at Middle Tennesse State
Dec. 3	TROY

2010 RESULTS

L	at Auburn	26-52
L	at Louisiana	24-31
W	LOUISIANA-MONROE	34-20
L	at Troy	28-35
L	LOUISVILLE	24-34
W	at North Texas	24-19
L	at Indiana	34-36
W	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	37-16
W	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	51-24
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY (OT)	35-36
L	at Navy	19-35
L	at Florida International	24-31

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.0	42
Rushing	149.1	68
Passing	254.3	31
Total	403.4	40
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.8	91
Rushing	206.9	110
Passing	230.2	82
Total	437.1	105
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+1	+0.8	51

FLORIDA ATLANTIC | OWLS

Sun Belt rank: 6 Record: 4-8 Sun Belt record: 3-5 (T-6th) Stadium: Lockhart Stadium (20,500)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Marvin Gentry-US PRESSWIRE

"The pieces are there on both offense and defense."
— Coach Howard Schnellenberger, on the season's outlook

OWLS at a GLANCE

COACH: Howard Schnellenberger — At FAU: 57-60, 10 years; **OVERALL:** 157-140-3, 26 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Darryl Jackson
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kurt VanValkenburgh

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2007
LAST BOWL: 2008, Motor City
RETURNING STARTERS: 15; 7 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Alfred Morris, WR DeAndre Richardson, LT Sam McRoy, DE Kevin Cyrille, LB Cory Henry, LB Yourhighness Morgan, FS Marcus Bartels, P Mickey Groody

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Morris is an all-conference candidate, and he will be running behind a veteran offensive line. The new 3-4 front seemed to liven up the defense in the spring, making the linebackers particularly happy.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Quarterback remains an issue still to be settled going into the fall. The top pass catchers from last year (WR Lester Jean with 64 catches, TE Rob Housler with 39) also must be replaced. Cornerback is an area of concern.

OFFENSE

With the starting quarterback undetermined after spring practice, and an unsettled situation at wide receiver, FAU will go into the fall counting heavily on veteran running back Alfred Morris and the experience of its offensive line.

Problem is, that line was not particularly effective in 2010. The Owls averaged only 94 yards per game rushing and gave up 36 sacks, second-most in the Sun Belt.

Morris was the league's third-most productive rusher, coming up 72 yards short of a second-consecutive 1,000-yard season.

Quarterback comes down to a competition between a pair of little-used juniors, Graham Wilbert (1 of 5 passing in his career) and David Kooi (3 of 8). Wilbert was considered the backup last year but played in only three games after injuring his thumb.

There isn't much in the way of experience among the returning receivers, who include sophomore DeAndre Richardson (three starts, 12 catches for 114 yards). FAU will need freshmen to make an impact at this position.

DEFENSE

The Owls are switching from a 4-3 front to a 3-4 to deal with the numerous spread offenses they will face, and the response in the spring was positive. The linebackers like the opportunities they will have to get after the passer.

FAU welcomes back seven starters on defense plus an eighth player, cornerback Keith Reaser, who had two starts as a freshman last year.

Juniors Yourhighness Morgan and David Hinds will man the inside linebacker spots, flanked by sophomores Cory Henry and Randell Johnson. Henry led the Owls in sacks with five last season while playing at defensive end.

The most experienced players returning are senior end Kevin Cyrille and safety Marcus Bartels, a two-year starter. Bartels is the leading returning tackler (104 stops) and also had two interceptions. Cyrille had 32 tackles, two of them sacks.

Junior Jimmy Jean and senior Jamere Johnson (three sacks) complete the defensive front at nose tackle and end, respectively.

Along with Bartels, Reaser, junior Demetrius Williamson and sophomore Treon Howard had four starts among them in the secondary.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Mickey Groody is an all-conference punter who averaged an eye-popping 45.7 yards per attempt in 2010, fifth-best in the country. With the loss of Ross Gornall, the kicking job likely will go to junior Vinny Zaccario, who was 6 of 8 on field goal attempts for Memphis in 2008 before transferring.

Sophomore Travis Jones (8.5-yards on punts) and senior Willie Floyd (21.7 on kickoffs) are the primary returners.

OVERVIEW

FAU will start 2011 with five consecutive road games — Florida, Michigan State, Auburn, Louisiana and North Texas — before playing its first home game in its new on-campus stadium. If the Owls can arrive at that point no worse than 2-3, they would be in the running to reach the six-win level for postseason eligibility, but they have to find the right answers at quarterback and receiver.

TOP NEWCOMER

SS Cortez Ash: A redshirt freshman, Ash (6-2, 180) can deliver a big hit. He was one of three players to record a sack in the final scrimmage of the spring, and he also broke up a pass.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	7	David Kooi	6-7	210	Jr.
RB	**32**	**Alfred Morris***	**5-11**	**222**	**Sr.**
FB	**8**	**Xavier Stinson***	**5-9**	**229**	**Jr.**
WR	2	DeAndre Richardson	6-2	180	So.
WR	80	Jabyes Cross	6-2	200	Fr.
TE	85	Darian Williams	6-3	225	Sr.
LT	**53**	**Samuel McRoy***	**6-4**	**275**	**Sr.**
LG	**56**	**Andy Czuprynski***	**6-5**	**270**	**Jr.**
C	**79**	**Jordan Sessa***	**6-5**	**280**	**Jr.**
RG	**52**	**Chris Newbold***	**6-5**	**285**	**Sr.**
RT	**64**	**Max Karrick***	**6-6**	**300**	**Sr.**
DEFENSE					
LE	**92**	**Kevin Cyrille***	**6-4**	**275**	**Sr.**
NT	**96**	**Jimmy Jean***	**6-2**	**290**	**Jr.**
RE	**98**	**Jamere Johnson***	**6-4**	**240**	**Sr.**
LB	**31**	**Cory Henry***	**6-3**	**238**	**So.**
LB	**48**	**Yourhighness Morgan***	**6-3**	**245**	**Jr.**
LB	11	David Hinds	6-2	220	Jr.
LB	**15**	**Randell Johnson***	**6-3**	**210**	**So.**
CB	34	Keith Reaser	6-0	175	So.
CB	19	Treon Howard	5-10	150	So.
SS	6	Demetrius Williamson	6-0	195	Jr.
FS	**27**	**Marcus Bartels***	**5-9**	**170**	**Sr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	35	Vinny Zaccario	5-11	180	Jr.
P	**17**	**Mickey Groody***	**5-11**	**170**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Florida
Sept. 10	at Michigan State
Sept. 24	at Auburn
Oct. 1	at Louisiana
Oct. 8	at North Texas
Oct. 15	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 22	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 5	ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 12	at FIU
Nov. 19	at Troy
Nov. 26	UAB
Dec. 3	ULM

2010 RESULTS

W	at UAB	32-31
L	MICHIGAN STATE	17-30
L	NORTH TEXAS	17-21
L	at South Florida	3-31
L	at ULM	17-20
L	at Arkansas State	16-37
W	FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	21-9
W	at Western Kentucky	17-16
W	LOUISIANA	24-23
L	at Texas	17-51
L	at Middle Tennessee State	14-38
L	TROY	7-44

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	16.8	113
Rushing	94.3	115
Passing	208.3	69
Total	302.6	107
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	29.3	79
Rushing	203.6	105
Passing	197.8	29
Total	401.3	85
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-9	-0.75	108

FLORIDA INT'L | GOLDEN PANTHERS

Sun Belt rank: 2 Record: 7-6 Sun Belt record: 6-2 (T-1st) Stadium: FIU Stadium (18,000)

By Paul Borden

Photo by Mark Cunningham/Getty Images

T.Y. Hilton

"We are not good enough in any way shape or form to think that we should be the hunted."
— Coach Mario Cristobal

GOLDEN PANTHERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Mario Cristobal — At FIU and overall: 16-33
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Scott Satterfield
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Todd Orlando

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST BOWL: Little Caesars, 2010
RETURNING STARTERS: 16; 8 offense, 6 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Wesley Carroll, WR T.Y. Hilton, RB Darriet Perry, LT Caylin Hauptmann, DE Tourek Williams, DT Isame Faciane, LB Winston Fraser, DB Jonathan Cyprien

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The Panthers are loaded at the skill positions on offense with depth and talent at wide receiver and running back. Carroll can be a very effective passer if he avoids pressing the issue. Hilton is a game-breaker as a receiver, runner and return man. Williams and Faciane can put pressure on opposing passers.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The run defense was better last year but still needs to improve. Depth could be an issue up front on both sides of the ball. Turnovers were a big killer at times last year and must be reduced.

OFFENSE

FIU has a slew of backs who can produce big-yardage days, assuming the line can be consistent in run-blocking. Senior running back Darriet Perry ran for 16 touchdowns and led the Panthers with 839 yards rushing last year.

The rotation includes Jeremiah Harden, whose debut season was cut short by injury, Kedrick Rhodes and Darian Mallary. That trio rushed for 1,299 yards in 2010.

The receiving corps, led by 2010 Sun Belt Player of the Year T.Y. Hilton, also is deep. Junior Wayne Times is a virtual clone of Hilton with his ability to break off big plays. But the Panthers will miss the clutch receiving ability of Greg Ellingson, who had 43 receptions last season. Hilton made 59 grabs.

Senior quarterback Wesley Carroll, who had a 61.6 completion percentage in 2010, is an accurate passer who should benefit from the year of experience as last year's starter. But he must avoid the kind of forced throws that led to 14 interceptions.

The line must replace two starters, including all-conference center Brad Sereni, but otherwise is a bit deeper unit than last year's unit. Left tackle Caylin Hauptmann is an all-conference candidate.

DEFENSE

The Panthers made substantial progress in stopping the run after being shredded for 233 yards a game in 2009. But they still have some work to do after giving up 169 yards a game on the ground last year.

They showed in the spring they can get pressure on the passer from up front with Tourek Williams, Isame Faciane and Greg Hickman leading the way.

Linebacker Winston Fraser, whose freshman year in 2009 was cut short by injury, essentially is a two-year starter. He needs to step up his game to make up for the loss of Toronto Smith.

The Panthers will miss Anthony Gaitor in the secondary but otherwise have battle-tested players with Jonathan Cyprien, Jose Cheeseborough and Emmanuel Souarin returning with starting experience.

Cyprien led the Panthers with 113 tackles last year. Junior Mertile, moved from wide receiver to the secondary during the season, led the team with three interceptions.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Panthers are set. Junior kicker Jack Griffin was 12 of 14 in field goals last season and hit the game-winner from 34 yards out in FIU's Little Caesars Bowl win over Toledo. Josh Brisk averaged 38.2 yards on his 35 punts. Hilton is one of the most electrifying return men in the country. He averaged nearly 29 yards per kick return, including an 89-yard return in the bowl win.

OVERVIEW

The Panthers might have been a year ahead of schedule in getting a share of last year's Sun Belt title, but now they move into the role of the "hunted" instead of being the "hunter." With four home games among their first five outings, the Panthers have the opportunity to avoid the kind of 0-4 hole they put themselves in at the start of last year. Two of the early home games (North Texas and Louisiana) are conference affairs.

TOP NEWCOMER

LB Jordan Hunt: The transfer from Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Mississippi went through spring practice after signing in December and looks to start in the fall. He had 88 tackles, 62 of them solo efforts, in his final year at Co-Lin, earning first-team NJCAA all-region honors.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**13**	**Wesley Carroll***	**6-1**	**202**	**Sr.**
RB	28	Darriet Perry	5-9	202	Sr.
WR	**4**	**T.Y. Hilton***	**5-10**	**183**	**Sr.**
WR	**5**	**Wayne Times***	**5-11**	**178**	**Jr.**
WR	**88**	**Jacob Younger***	**6-2**	**195**	**Jr.**
TE	**30**	**Jonathan Faucher***	**6-3**	**233**	**Sr.**
LT	**71**	**Caylin Hauptmann***	**6-4**	**311**	**Sr.**
LG	67	Kevin Van Kirk	6-3	274	Jr.
C	72	Ceedrick Davis	6-4	305	So.
RG	**53**	**Curtis Bryant***	**6-2**	**283**	**Jr.**
RT	**54**	**Rupert Bryan Jr.***	**6-2**	**276**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	**97**	**Tourek Williams***	**6-4**	**247**	**Jr.**
DT	99	Isame Faciane	6-5	260	So.
DT	**91**	**Joshua Fourney***	**6-2**	**270**	**Jr.**
DE	55	Greg Hickman	6-1	274	So.
LB	**34**	**Winston Fraser***	**6-2**	**227**	**Jr.**
LB	xx	Jordan Hunt	6-1	228	Jr.
Star	24	Emmanuel Souarin	5-11	176	Jr.
CB	xx	Tevin Blanchard	6-0	180	Jr.
CB	**27**	**Jose Cheeseborough***	**5-9**	**160**	**So.**
SS	21	Chuck Grace	5-10	185	Sr.
FS	**25**	**Jonathan Cyprien***	**6-0**	**205**	**Jr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**38**	**Jack Griffin***	**5-10**	**195**	**Jr.**
P	**40**	**Josh Brisk***	**5-10**	**190**	**Jr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 9	at Louisville
Sept. 17	UCF
Sept. 24	LOUISIANA
Oct. 1	DUKE
Oct. 8	at Akron
Oct. 18	at Arkansas State
Oct. 25	TROY
Nov. 5	at Western Kentucky
Nov. 12	FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 19	at ULM
Nov. 26	at Middle Tennessee

2010 RESULTS

L	RUTGERS	14-19
L	at Texas A&M	20-27
L	at Maryland	28-42
L	at Pittsburgh	17-44
W	WESTERN KENTUCKY	28-21
W	at North Texas	34-10
L	at Florida Atlantic	9-21
W	ULM (2OT)	42-35
W	at Troy	52-35
W	at Louisiana	38-17
W	ARKANSAS STATE	31-24
L	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	27-28
	Little Caesars Bowl	
W	vs. Toledo	34-32

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.8	51
Rushing	187.5	27
Passing	207.5	70
Total	395.1	46
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.3	65
Rushing	168.7	77
Passing	200.2	32
Total	368.9	61
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	36

LOUISIANA | RAGIN' CAJUNS

Sun Belt rank: 7 | Record: 3-9 | Sun Belt record: 3-5 (T-6th) | Stadium: Cajun Field (31,000)

By Paul Borden

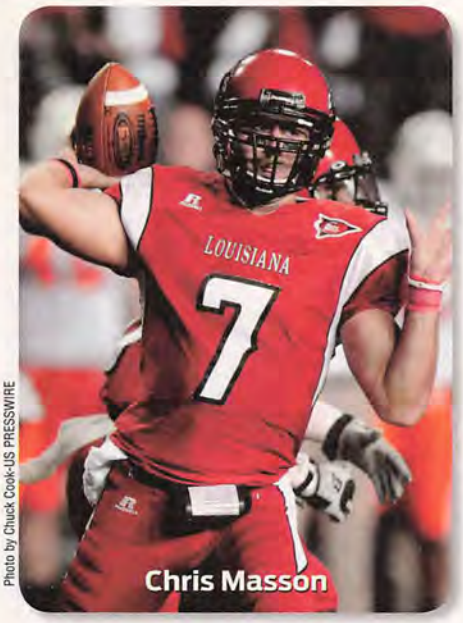


Photo by Chuck Cook-US PRESSWIRE

Chris Masson

"Some jobs are so close they may not be decided until the week of our season opener."
— Coach Mark Hudspeth

RAGIN' CAJUNS at a GLANCE

COACH: Mark Hudspeth, first year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Johnson
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Greg Stewart

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1994, Big West
LAST BOWL: 1970, Grantland Rice Bowl
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 5 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Chris Masson, TE Ladarius Green, DE Bernard Smith, LB Devon Lewis-Buchanan, CB Dwight "Bill" Bentley, SS Lionel Stokes, CB Melvin White

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Green, who can do more than catch short routes over the middle, is one of the nation's top tight ends. He had at least one catch of 20 yards or more in all but one of his 10 games. Whoever wins the quarterback job will be experienced. The secondary is the most experienced unit on defense.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Cajuns have questions at wide receiver and the offensive line, and they lack depth at running back. The defense, especially up front, has serious depth issues as well and did not stop the run well last season. One or two injuries could be disastrous.

OFFENSE

New coordinator Jay Johnson will look to bring run-pass balance, at least in the early going, as Louisiana moves from its primary spread offense of recent seasons.

Though senior Chris Masson returns as a two-year starter at quarterback, he faces a challenge from junior Blaine Gautier, who had two starts when Masson was injured last year. Senior Brad McGuire also is in the picture at quarterback, and he could be a fullback in a two-back set.

The Cajuns have one of the top receiving tight ends nationally in senior Ladarius Green, whose 794 receiving yards led all tight ends in the country even though he missed two games with an ankle injury.

Wide receiver and running back are concerns. Aaron Spikes led the Cajuns in rushing (339 yards) as a true freshman last fall, but he will be pushed by sophomore Robert Walker and junior Yobes Walker.

At wide receiver, junior Javone Lawson is coming off a knee injury that cut short his 2010 season. Sophomores Darryl Surgent and James Butler have good speed but lack experience.

The line also is a big issue. The Cajuns lost three seniors from last year, and only five offensive linemen have collegiate experience.

DEFENSE

The Cajuns likely will have several different looks under new coordinator Greg Stewart, but that may be simply an effort to mask deficiencies in depth and experience.

The Cajuns, thin up front, hoped LSU transfer Cordian Hagans would step up more at tackle than he did in the spring. Senior end Bernard Smith didn't start last year but finished with 31 tackles (two sacks).

Senior Devon Lewis-Buchanan is the leading returning tackler (63 stops), but the Cajuns still have some sorting out to do at linebacker.

There is some experience in the secondary, where senior corner Dwight "Bill" Bentley is a candidate for all-conference honors. Senior safeties Lionel Stokes and Le'Marcus Gibson, sophomore safety Cooper Gerami, and senior cornerback Melvin White all had at least one start last year.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore Brett Baer took over as the Cajuns' kicker in the fourth game of last season and was 7 of 7 on field goals after that. But he faces a challenge in the fall from incoming freshman Carlos Alvarez. Both also will compete for the primary punting job.

Incoming junior college transfer Harry Peoples is expected to take over punt returns. Sophomore Darryl Surgent averaged just more than 20 yards on 31 kickoff returns last year.

OVERVIEW

Depth was an issue all of last year for the Cajuns, who were outscored 237-105 in the second half of games, and that will continue to be the case at least until first-year coach Mark Hudspeth gets his recruiting mojo working. Louisiana is going to rely on junior college transfers to carry a big load right away.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Cordian Hagans: The transfer from LSU didn't necessarily lock down a starting job in the spring, but he will be No. 1 on the depth chart heading into the fall. He was considered one of the top prospects in Georgia when he came out of Northview High in Snellville in 2009.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**7**	**Chris Masson***	**6-2**	**203**	**Sr.**
RB	**20**	**Aaron Spikes***	**5-10**	**195**	**So.**
FB	8	Brad McGuire	6-2	225	Sr.
WR	82	Javone Lawson	6-1	183	Jr.
WR	18	Andrew Joseph	5-10	167	Sr.
TE	**89**	**Ladarius Green***	**6-6**	**230**	**Sr.**
LT	72	Leonardo Bates	6-5	316	Jr.
LG	**74**	**Kyle Plouhar***	**6-7**	**300**	**Sr.**
C	71	Andre Huval	6-2	310	So.
RG	67	Daniel Quave	6-4	330	Fr.
RT	**76**	**Jaron Odom***	**6-7**	**350**	**Jr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	44	Bernard Smith	6-3	235	Sr.
DT	93	Cordian Hagans	6-5	305	Jr.
DT	**90**	**Derreck Dean***	**5-11**	**287**	**Sr.**
DE	**53**	**Chris Tucker***	**6-2**	**260**	**Sr.**
LB	**11**	**Devon Lewis-Buchanan***	**6-2**	**210**	**Sr.**
LB	56	Richard Brooks	6-2	240	Sr.
LB	21	Lance Kelley	6-3	199	Sr.
CB	**5**	**Dwight Bentley***	**5-11**	**173**	**Sr.**
CB	22	Melvin White	6-3	190	Sr.
SS	**24**	**Lionel Stokes***	**5-10**	**180**	**Sr.**
FS	30	Le'Marcus Gibson	6-0	210	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**40**	**Brett Baer***	**6-0**	**187**	**Jr.**
P	**40**	**Brett Baer***	**6-0**	**187**	**Jr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Oklahoma State
Sept. 10	at Kent State
Sept. 17	NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 24	at FIU
Oct. 1	FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 8	TROY
Oct. 15	NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 22	at Western Kentucky
Oct. 29	at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 5	ULM
Nov. 12	at Arkansas State
Nov. 26	at Arizona

2010 RESULTS

L	at Georgia	7-55
W	ARKANSAS STATE	31-24
L	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	14-34
W	at North Texas	28-27
L	OKLAHOMA STATE	28-54
L	at Troy	24-31
L	WESTERN KENTUCKY	21-54
L	at Ohio	31-38
L	at Mississippi	21-43
L	at Florida Atlantic	23-24
L	FIU	17-38
W	at Louisiana-Monroe	23-22

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.3	92
Rushing	100.6	111
Passing	250.0	37
Total	350.6	83
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	37.0	112
Rushing	162.6	70
Passing	236.8	90
Total	399.4	82
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-3	-0.25	T-71

LOUISIANA-MONROE | WARHAWKS

Sun Belt rank: 4 Record: 5-7 Sun Belt record: 4-4 (T-4th) Stadium: Malone Stadium (30,427)

By Paul Borden

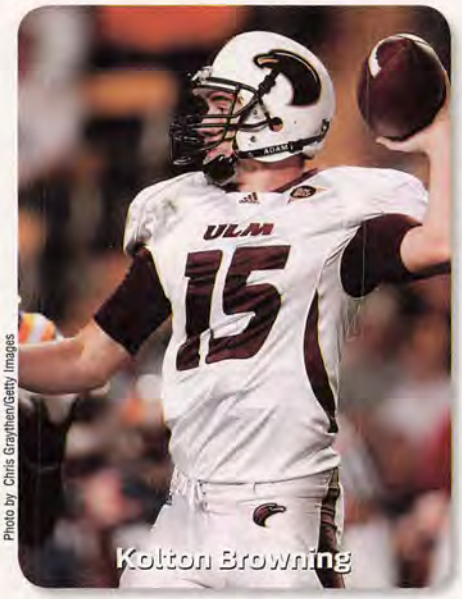


Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images

"I am very comfortable right now with both sides of the football."
— Coach Todd Berry

WARHAWKS at a GLANCE

COACH: Todd Berry — At ULM: 5-7, 1 year
OVERALL: 34-67, 9 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Farmer
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Troy Reffert

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2005
LAST BOWL: Never
RETURNING STARTERS: 19; 10 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Kolton Browning, WR Luther Ambrose, WR Tavarese Maye, DE Ken Dorsey, LB Cameron Blakes, LB Jason Edwards, DB Darius Prelow, DB Nate Brown

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The offense is a veteran unit with a deep wide receiving corps and an experienced quarterback in Browning, who is a threat to run or pass. The interior line also returns intact. Blakes and Dorsey are solid pass rushers, having combined for 11 sacks last year.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The running game was sporadic throughout the year, and the situation at running back is thin behind starter Jyruss Edwards. Browning is the top returning rusher after compiling 385 yards last year. Depth will be sorely tested with a schedule that sends the Warhawks to Florida State, TCU and Iowa for three of their first four games.

OFFENSE

ULM returns its starting offensive lineup virtually intact, plus sophomore running back Jyruss Edwards, who had four starts while backing up veteran Frank Goodin last year.

Quarterback Kolton Browning, who won the job as a redshirt freshman last spring, goes into the fall as the No. 1 guy. A 62-percent completion passer, he has four experienced wide receivers as targets — Luther Ambrose with 65 catches, Tavarese Maye with 43, and Anthony McCall and Brent Leonard with 33 each.

When the Warhawks play with a tight end, junior Keavon Milton, who has three career catches, steps in.

A critical issue is the lack of experience at running back behind Edwards, who rushed for 375 yards as a redshirt freshman. Sophomore Centarius Donald, who logged 66 yards on 21 carries last year, came out of the spring No. 2.

Mitchell Bailey, a former fullback for the Arkansas Razorbacks, will be in the picture when fall camp opens.

The starting line is all back, but that might be a mixed blessing. The Warhawks gave up 34 sacks last year.

DEFENSE

Linebackers Jason Edwards and Cameron Blakes were 1-2 in tackles last season, and Blakes led the Warhawks in sacks with six. He had 11 tackles for loss.

Defensive end Ken Dorsey is a candidate for the All-Sun Belt team. He led the Warhawks with 12 tackles for loss, including five sacks.

Up front, sophomore Kentarius Caldwell emerged from the spring ahead of last year's starter, Emanuel Jefferies, at nose tackle. Jefferies started the last four games of 2010, but Caldwell saw considerable time at defensive end and had a strong spring.

Senior Lincston Jones came out of spring lining up with Edwards and Blakes at linebacker. Jones has had to contend with injuries throughout his career.

ULM shook up the secondary a bit, with senior Nate Brown moving to safety from corner because of the dismissal of veteran Robert Nelson before spring camp. Sophomores Otis Peterson and Isaiah Newsome, and senior Darius Prelow, are returning starters in the secondary. Sophomore Vincent Eddie is a new starter at corner.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior kicker Radi Jabour is only 25 of 41 on field-goal attempts in his career, but he was 7 of 9 last season. Punter Aaron Munoz averaged just over 39 yards a try on 42 attempts as a freshman. The Warhawks will look for a new punt returner with the dismissal of Nelson. Edwards, Donald and Ambrose all returned kickoffs last year.

OVERVIEW

ULM should move the football, especially with its talented receiving group, but needs to gain consistency in its running game. The key for the Warhawks will be getting through some early season beat-downs and being healthy when conference play begins. They were within one win of qualifying for a bowl a year ago and should be competitive again in the Sun Belt.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Rob'Donovan Lewis: Lewis signed with Memphis out of Jonesboro (La.) High but transferred to ULM during fall camp last year. He sat out the season but will have four years of eligibility beginning this fall. He was No. 2 on the depth chart coming out of the spring.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	15	**Kolton Browning***	6-1	202	So.
RB	7	Jyruss Edwards	5-11	189	So.
WR	83	**Anthony McCall***	6-1	191	Sr.
WR	18	**Brent Leonard***	6-1	179	Jr.
WR	8	**Tavarese Maye***	5-11	171	So.
WR	22	**Luther Ambrose***	5-8	181	Sr.
LT	53	**Patrick Dvoracek***	6-3	311	Jr.
LG	69	**Justin Roberts***	6-4	307	Sr.
C	72	**Ryan McCaul***	6-4	293	Sr.
RG	56	**Jonathan Gill***	6-3	302	Jr.
RT	57	**Anthony Montgomery***	6-4	309	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	52	**Ken Dorsey***	6-0	270	Sr.
NT	91	Kentarius Caldwell	6-2	254	So.
DE	55	Troy Evans	6-1	250	Sr.
LB	41	Lincston Jones	6-0	244	Sr.
LB	54	**Jason Edwards***	5-10	230	Sr.
LB	35	**Cameron Blakes***	6-1	218	Jr.
CB	9	**Otis Peterson***	5-11	163	So.
CB	27	Vincent Eddie	5-8	153	So.
S	26	Nate Brown	5-9	181	Sr.
S	37	**Darius Prelow***	6-0	204	Sr.
S	25	**Isaiah Newsome***	5-11	187	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	85	**Radi Jabour***	6-0	195	Sr.
P	2	**Aaron Munoz***	5-11	186	So.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Florida State
Sept. 10	GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 17	at TCU
Sept. 24	at Iowa
Oct. 8	ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 15	at Troy
Oct. 22	at North Texas
Oct. 29	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 5	at Louisiana
Nov. 12	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 19	FIU
Dec. 3	at Florida Atlantic

2010 RESULTS

L	at Arkansas	7-31
L	at Arkansas State	20-34
W	SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	21-20
L	at Auburn	3-52
W	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	20-17
W	at Western Kentucky	35-30
L	at Middle Tennessee	10-38
W	TROY	28-14
L	at FIU (2OT)	35-42
L	at LSU	0-51
W	NORTH TEXAS	49-37
L	LOUISIANA	22-23

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.8	101
Rushing	120.3	96
Passing	226.7	56
Total	347.0	85
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	32.4	97
Rushing	159.1	67
Passing	219.3	58
Total	378.3	67
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-6	-0.5	T-88

MIDDLE TENNESSEE | BLUE RAIDERS

Sun Belt rank: 5 Record: 6-7 Sun Belt record: 5-3 (3rd) Stadium: Floyd Stadium (30,788)

By Paul Borden

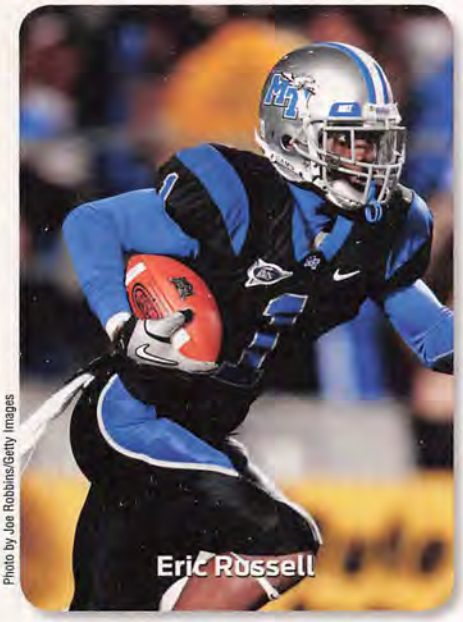


Photo by Joe Robbins/Getty Images

"We are going to be a young team at nearly every position."
— Coach Rick Stockstill

BLUE RAIDERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Rick Stockstill — At Middle Tennessee and overall: 33-30, 5 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Willie Simmons
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Ellis

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2006, co-champs
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2008
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 7 offense, 3 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Benjamin Cunningham, WR Malcolm Beyah, OL Mike Williams, DE Omar McLendon, LB Darin Davis, LB Justin Jones, CB Arness Ikner, K Alan Gendreau

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The offensive line is a salty bunch with the return of four starters. Newcomers also saw extra time in the spring when three starters were out with injuries. Wide receiver has potential, and the linebacking corps looks solid.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The defensive front four will have all new starters and will likely have two freshmen starting. The run defense was a big liability in 2010, and that could very well be the case again. Quarterback needs to get settled fast. Neither Logan Kilgore nor Jeff Murphy emerged in the spring.

OFFENSE

Life at Middle Tennessee now moves into its A.D.D. period — After Dwight Dasher.

Dasher, who began his senior season on a four-game suspension for receiving an improper loan, has exhausted his eligibility after compiling 29 starts at quarterback and dazzling fans with his footwork and escapability over the past four years.

His replacement was still undecided coming out of the spring. Sophomore Logan Kilgore and junior Jeff Murphy will continue their competition in fall camp. Both made three appearances in Dasher's absence in 2010, with Kilgore emerging with a slight edge (540 to 395) in passing yards.

Quarterback, however, is one of only four positions on offense that won't bring back a starter from last year.

Running back is another, but junior Benjamin Cunningham (355 yards rushing) is poised to step in there.

The Blue Raiders will have three starters back at wide receiver, including their No. 2 pass catcher in senior Malcolm Beyah (29 receptions for 388 yards). They also welcome back four starters on the offensive line, including senior Mike Williams, an All-Sun Belt candidate at tackle.

DEFENSE

The Raiders face a rebuilding task on defense with only three starters — cornerback Arness Ikner, and linebackers Darin Davis and Justin Jones — returning from 2010.

The loss of five players from the front seven, including the entire line, could be a mixed blessing, however.

Middle Tennessee won't have experience, of course, but they struggled stopping the run a year ago, giving up more than 187 yards a game on the ground. Maybe new faces like freshman tackles Jimmy Staten, Morris Moore and Patrick McNeil will add new life to the unit.

In addition to the return of Davis and Jones at linebacker, promising sophomore Stephen Roberts is expected back from a knee injury that kept him sidelined in 2010.

Even with three new starters, the secondary might not be that big of a concern. The Raiders will get back two players — cornerback Kenneth Gilstrap and safety Sammy Seamster — who saw action as freshmen in 2009 but sat out last year with injuries.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The kicking game looks to be in good hands thanks to the feet of senior Alan Gendreau, a first-team All-Sun Belt selection, and punter Josh Davis, a second-team pick.

Gendreau converted 10 of 12 field-goal attempts and is 38 of 52 in his career. Davis averaged 42.7 yards per boot as a freshman last year, second-best in school history. Senior punter Nathaniel Toulson also is in the picture.

Senior Eric Russell averaged 6.8 yards running back punts and 26.3 returning kickoffs.

OVERVIEW

If they find the answer at quarterback, the Blue Raiders should be able to move the ball. But the big question will be if they can stop anybody. New defensive coordinator Steve Ellis has a big job in front of him, and building that defensive unit must be done quickly with the Raiders facing early tests against Purdue and Georgia Tech.

TOP NEWCOMER

LB Stephen Roberts: Roberts' collegiate debut will come a year later than expected after a knee injury in 2010 fall camp wiped out his freshman season. He was penciled in as a starter at that time and will go into fall camp at No. 1 on the depth chart again.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	10	Logan Kilgore	6-3	178	So.
RB	2	Benjamin Cunningham	5-10	200	Jr.
WR	**15**	**Sancho McDonald***	**6-3**	**205**	**Sr.**
WR	**3**	**Tavarres Jefferson***	**5-9**	**181**	**Jr.**
WR	13	Shane Blissard	6-5	212	Sr.
WR	**4**	**Malcolm Beyah***	**5-11**	**191**	**Sr.**
LT	**78**	**Mike Williams***	**6-2**	**265**	**Sr.**
LG	**60**	**Brandon McLeroy***	**6-3**	**300**	**Sr.**
C	**50**	**Colin Boss***	**6-4**	**306**	**Sr.**
RG	**79**	**Preston Bailey***	**6-5**	**300**	**Jr.**
RT	61	Jadareius Hamlin	6-2	282	So.
DEFENSE					
LE	85	Omar McLendon	6-4	236	Jr.
LT	51	Patrick McNeil	6-3	285	Fr.
RT	90	Jimmy Staten	6-4	266	So.
RE	89	Dearco Nolan	6-2	249	So.
LB	**59**	**Darin Davis***	**6-1**	**206**	**Sr.**
LB	30	Stephen Roberts	6-3	229	So.
LB	**32**	**Justin Jones***	**5-11**	**210**	**Jr.**
CB	18	T.L. Edwards	6-1	180	Sr.
CB	**5**	**Arness Ikner***	**5-9**	**170**	**Sr.**
SS	1	Eric Russell	5-11	181	Sr.
FS	24	Derrick Crumpton	5-11	195	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**38**	**Alan Gendreau***	**5-10**	**175**	**Sr.**
P	**27**	**Josh Davis***	**5-10**	**190**	**So.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Purdue
Sept. 10	GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 24	at Troy
Oct. 1	MEMPHIS
Oct. 6	WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 22	at Florida Atlantic
Oct. 29	LOUISIANA
Nov. 5	at Tennessee
Nov. 12	at ULM
Nov. 19	ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 26	FIU
Dec. 3	at North Texas

2010 RESULTS

L	MINNESOTA	17-24
W	AUSTIN PEAY	56-33
L	at Memphis	17-24
W	at Louisiana	34-14
L	TROY	13-42
L	at Georgia Tech	14-42
W	ULM	38-10
L	at Arkansas State	24-51
L	NORTH TEXAS	17-23
W	at Western Kentucky	27-26
W	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	38-14
W	at FIU	28-27
	GoDaddy.com Bowl	
L	vs. Miami (Ohio)	21-35

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.5	62
Rushing	180.8	31
Passing	191.2	83
Total	371.9	69
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.1	69
Rushing	187.9	94
Passing	199.0	30
Total	386.9	72
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-19	-1.46	120

TROY | TROJANS

Sun Belt rank: 1 Record: 8-5 Sun Belt record: 6-2 (T-1st) Stadium: Veterans Memorial Stadium (30,000)

By Matt Lowe

Photo by Michael Wade

"He's got really good field awareness. He's smart. And he's got savvy for this offense throwing the football."
— Larry Blakeney on Corey Robinson

TROJANS at a GLANCE

COACH: Larry Blakeney — At Troy and overall: 161-82-1, 20 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kenny Edenfield
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeremy Rowell

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2007
RETURNING STARTERS: 15; 5 offense, 8 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Corey Robinson, RB Shawn Southward, LT James Brown, LG Kyle Wilborn, DE Jonathan Massaquoi, LB Xavier Lamb, LB Brannon Bryan, S LaDarrius Madden

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Robinson is arguably the top quarterback in the league. Southward offers versatility in the backfield. Brown is a massive presence at left tackle. Massaquoi is a ferocious pass-rusher who can take over a game. Linebackers Lamb, Bryan and Kanorris Davis are veteran playmakers. The secondary and kicking game are solid.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Troy must replace its top three wideouts, including leading receiver Jerrel Jernigan. Three positions on the offensive line remain unsettled. Someone will have to emerge in the return game after the departure of the electrifying Jernigan.

OFFENSE

Troy is in great hands at the quarterback position with Sun Belt Freshman of the Year Corey Robinson back for his sophomore season. Robinson, whom coach Larry Blakeney compared to former Trojan star Levi Brown, completed more than 63 percent of his passes for 3,726 yards and 28 touchdowns with 15 interceptions.

Shawn Southward returns to anchor the ground attack. The multi-dimensional Southward ran for a team-high 623 yards and seven touchdowns a year ago, a 5.4-yard average per carry.

He will be aided in the backfield by punishing fullback/H-back D.J. Taylor, Justin Albert and Chris Anderson, who started six games at tailback a year ago and can also line up at receiver.

Chip Reeves is the team's top returning wideout. He caught 30 passes for 515 yards and five touchdowns a year ago, and led the team with four catches for 94 yards and a score in this spring's annual T-Day Game.

Brett Moncrief, Jamel Johnson, Eric Thomas, B.J. Chitty and Khary Franklin also will see time at wideout, but keep an eye on junior college transfer Corey Johnson. Blakeney likes his ability.

Troy will be anchored up front by seniors James Brown and Kyle Wilborn. Brown has the look of a future pro, while Wilborn can play all five positions.

DEFENSE

Blakeney hinted a year ago that left end Jonathan Massaquoi could "be as good as he wanted to be" — and he was right. The 6-2, 250-pound Massaquoi led the Sun Belt in sacks (13.5) and tackles for loss (20.5) to go along with his 76 tackles.

Defensive tackles Tony Davis and Emmanuel Dudley, who was held out of spring practice, will join Massaquoi along the defensive wall. John Robles and Brandon Boudreaux, who can really run, will anchor the right end position.

Xavier Lamb, Kanorris Davis and Brannon Bryan should combine to form the best linebacker trio in the conference. Lamb is short (5-9) but he's a quality striker from the middle linebacker position, as is Davis.

Bryan blossomed late last season at the weakside spot and is expected to continue to improve. Johnny Thompson will spell Davis at the strongside/nickel position.

Troy returns a wealth of starting experience in the secondary. Jimmie Anderson and Kejuan Phillips are the favorites to man the two corner spots, but Barry Valcin and Bryan Willis will be in the running as well.

LaDarrius Madden and Brynden Trawick were listed as the starting safeties following spring ball, but Cam Hudson, who was limited in spring practice, will be in the mix in the fall.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jerrel Jernigan cannot be replaced, so look for multiple players to fill his role as the team's leading punt and kick returner. Senior Michael Taylor will handle the kickoff and place-kicking duties. Senior Will Goggans will handle the punting.

OVERVIEW

Despite the loss of Jernigan and some key offensive players, Troy has more than enough talent on both sides of the ball to make a run at a sixth consecutive league title.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Montrell Conner: Conner originally signed with Mississippi State in 2009 but transferred to Troy this offseason via Copiah-Lincoln Community College. He adds much needed size (6-2, 220) and power to an already versatile backfield.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	6	**Corey Robinson***	6-0	214	So.
RB	20	**Shawn Southward***	5-8	182	Jr.
WR	11	Khary Franklin	5-7	165	So.
WR	8	**Chip Reeves***	5-11	169	Jr.
WR	81	Eric Thomas	6-2	186	Sr.
WR	14	Jamel Johnson	6-2	202	So.
LT	70	**James Brown***	6-4	329	Sr.
LG	77	**Kyle Wilborn***	6-4	311	Jr.
C	60	Zach Swindall	6-1	282	Sr.
RG	78	Jacob Creech	6-3	292	So.
RT	72	DeMarkus Underwood	6-6	315	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	94	**Jonathan Massaquoi***	6-2	250	Jr.
DT	49	**Tony Davis***	6-0	252	Jr.
NT	92	**Emmanuel Dudley***	6-1	285	Sr.
DE	97	John Robles	6-4	245	Sr.
LB	44	Kanorris Davis	5-10	206	Jr.
LB	25	**Xavier Lamb***	5-9	220	Sr.
LB	42	**Brannon Bryan***	6-0	230	Jr.
CB	19	**Jimmie Anderson***	5-8	154	Sr.
CB	34	**Kejuan Phillips***	5-9	176	Jr.
S	10	Brynden Trawick	6-3	210	Jr.
S	30	**LaDarrius Madden***	6-0	200	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	18	**Michael Taylor***	5-10	215	Sr.
P	47	**Will Goggans***	6-0	233	Sr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Clemson
Sept. 17	at Arkansas
Sept. 24	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 1	UAB
Oct. 8	at Louisiana
Oct. 15	ULM
Oct. 25	at FIU
Nov. 5	at Navy
Nov. 12	NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 19	FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 26	at Western Kentucky
Dec. 3	at Arkansas State

2010 RESULTS

W	BOWLING GREEN	30-27
L	at Oklahoma State	38-41
L	at UAB	33-34
W	ARKANSAS STATE	35-28
W	at Middle Tennessee	42-13
W	LOUISIANA	31-24
L	at Louisiana-Monroe	14-28
W	at North Texas	41-35
L	FIU	35-52
L	at South Carolina	24-69
W	WESTERN KENTUCKY	28-14
W	at Florida Atlantic	44-7
	New Orleans Bowl	
W	vs. Ohio	48-21

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	34.1	20
Rushing	156.6	56
Passing	296.9	11
Total	453.5	17
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.2	84
Rushing	165.2	73
Passing	244.6	100
Total	409.9	89
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-0	-0.00	55

WESTERN KENTUCKY | HILLTOPPERS

Sun Belt rank: 9 Record: 2-10 Sun Belt: 2-6 (9th) Stadium: Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium (22,113)

By Nick Baumgardner

Bobby Rainey

Photo by Mark Zerof-US PRESSWIRE

"We're going to get back to being blue collar. That's what Western Kentucky University is — we work and we find a way."
— Coach Willie Taggart

HILLTOPPERS at a GLANCE

COACH: Willie Taggart — At WKU and overall: 2-10, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Zach Azzanni, Willie Taggart
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Lance Guidry

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2002, Gateway Football Conference co-champs
LAST BOWL: None
RETURNING STARTERS: 19; 7 offense, 10 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Kawaun Jakes, RB Bobby Rainey, TE Jack Doyle, OT Wes Jeffries, CB Tyree Robinson, CB Arius Wright, DE Quanterus Smith, DT Jamarcus Allen

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Bobby Rainey ran all over the Sun Belt last season and had little trouble against Kentucky and Nebraska during non-conference outings. Rainey is a legit star for a program that's in desperate need of a spark. Youth, speed and enthusiasm on defense could provide a big jump this season.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: WKU has a new defensive coordinator in Lance Guidry and a young, impressionable defense in tow. The Hilltoppers are still one of the youngest teams in America and have little to no winning experience, as the program has won just two games over the past two seasons.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Kawaun Jakes, who was the team's most valuable player during the spring game, showed a better understanding of the West Coast offense in the offseason, firmly keeping his grasp on the starting quarterback spot over redshirt freshman Brandon Doughty.

Doughty split the reps in the spring, and might be the better pure passer in time, but he will have plenty of catching up to do this fall. Jakes also showed more of a commitment to running the ball this spring, an attribute that further sets him apart in second-year coach Willie Taggart's offense.

In any case, the offense revolves around Bobby Rainey — the nation's third-leading rusher in 2010. Rainey has an outside chance at setting the school's career yardage record in 2011, and he will be the unquestioned centerpiece on the ground ... and possibly through the air at times.

The line has to replace Preston King and Mychal Patterson, but it does bring back four-year starting tackle Wes Jeffries along with two-year starters Adam Smith and Sean Conway.

The biggest question on offense will be the pass catchers.

Marcus Vasquez, last year's leading receiver, missed the spring due to a shoulder injury but should be good to start fall drills. Tight end Jack Doyle also didn't see much time this spring but should be full go in the fall.

The thin receiving corps got even thinner this spring when sophomore Willie McNeal was lost for the season with a knee injury, leaving several unproven first-timers with an opportunity for playing time.

DEFENSE

The secondary should set the table for first-year defensive coordinator Lance Guidry.

Starting corners Tyree Robinson and Arius Wright — both of whom started as true freshmen — anchor a group that was highly improved in 2010. Starting safeties Kiante Young and Kareem Peterson also are back, as is virtually every primary backup in the defensive backfield.

The line is a year older and wiser, but it will have to muster more production than it did a year ago when the Hilltoppers managed a scant 12 sacks. Much like the defensive backfield, WKU returns basically everyone who played last season, including all four starters along the front line, although the starters could be different this time around.

The linebacking corps will need some rebuilding, as inside linebacker Thomas Majors — who posted back-to-back 100-tackle seasons — was lost to graduation.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Casey Tinius should still have his job entering the fall despite having a dreadful 2010 season in which he went six of 15 on field-goal tries. Backup Monte Merrick could make a push, but he wasn't able to do enough last season to take the job away.

Hendrix Brakefield made every punt for WKU in 2010 as a true freshman, averaging 40.5 yards.

OVERVIEW

The Hilltoppers are a year older, a year stronger and a year smarter under second-year coach Willie Taggart. The coach now has signed back-to-back top-ranked Sun Belt recruiting classes, giving him competition at several spots again this season. Expectations are still low, but at least there's a chance of a big jump.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Cameron Brown: Brown (6-2, 195) is one of two Rivals.com three-star receiver signees for WKU, and he has the physical tools to compete early in a thin receiving corps. He chose the Hilltoppers over Minnesota, New Mexico State and Stephen F. Austin.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**6**	**Kawaun Jakes***	**6-3**	**190**	**Jr.**
RB	**3**	**Bobby Rainey***	**5-8**	**205**	**Sr.**
WR	**9**	**Marcus Vasquez***	**6-1**	**187**	**Jr.**
WR	47	Neil Wilson	6-2	201	So.
WR	4	Rico Brown	5-11	185	Fr.
TE	**82**	**Jack Doyle***	**6-6**	**244**	**Jr.**
LT	**77**	**Wes Jeffries***	**6-4**	**298**	**Sr.**
LG	69	Luke Stansfield	6-4	305	Jr.
C	**65**	**Sean Conway***	**6-3**	**297**	**So.**
RG	**76**	**Adam Smith***	**6-5**	**334**	**Jr.**
RT	75	Seth White	6-5	287	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**5**	**Jared Clendenin***	**6-3**	**270**	**Sr.**
NT	**43**	**Jamarcus Allen***	**5-11**	**271**	**Jr.**
DT	96	Rammell Lewis	6-2	290	Jr.
DE	**93**	**Quanterus Smith***	**6-5**	**246**	**Jr.**
LB	**13**	**Xavius Boyd***	**6-2**	**210**	**So.**
LB	12	Tye Golden	6-2	226	Jr.
LB	50	Ben Duvall	6-3	229	Sr.
CB	**21**	**Arius Wright***	**5-10**	**192**	**So.**
CB	**22**	**Tyree Robinson***	**5-10**	**198**	**So.**
SS	**29**	**Kiante Young***	**5-11**	**221**	**So.**
FS	**46**	**Kareem Peterson***	**5-11**	**182**	**Jr.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**83**	**Casey Tinius***	**6-0**	**188**	**Sr.**
P	**99**	**Hendrix Brakefield***	**6-4**	**223**	**So.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	vs. Kentucky
Sept. 10	NAVY
Sept. 17	INDIANA STATE
Oct. 1	ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 6	at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 15	at Florida Atlantic
Oct. 22	LOUISIANA
Oct. 29	at ULM
Nov. 5	FIU
Nov. 12	at LSU
Nov. 19	at North Texas
Nov. 26	TROY

2010 RESULTS

L	at Nebraska	10-49
L	at Kentucky	28-63
L	INDIANA	21-38
L	at South Florida	12-24
L	at FIU	21-28
L	ULM	30-35
W	at Louisiana	54-21
L	NORTH TEXAS	6-33
L	FLORIDA ATLANTIC	16-17
W	at Arkansas State	36-35
L	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	26-27
L	at Troy	14-28

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.8	90
Rushing	175.5	33
Passing	143.5	115
Total	319.0	98

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	33.2	99
Rushing	177.3	86
Passing	202.9	36
Total	380.2	68

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
+3	+0.25	42

LOUISIANA TECH | BULLDOGS

WAC rank: 4 Record: 5-7 WAC record: 4-4 (5th) Stadium: Joe Aillet Stadium: 30,600

By Geoff Grammer

Lennon Creer

Photo by Thomas Campbell-US PRESSWIRE

"We look like a completely different team than last year. We are further along in every way."
— Coach Sonny Dykes

BULLDOGS at a GLANCE

COACH: Sonny Dykes — At Louisiana Tech and overall: 5-7, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tony Franklin
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tommy Spangler

RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 5 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Colby Cameron, RB Lennon Creer, WR Taulib Ikharo, WR Tim Molton, DE Matt Broha, LB Jay Dudley, LB Adrien Cole,

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Creer was a beast in the second half of 2010 and could be one of the top runners in the WAC this fall. Considering he has a start-worthy backup in Ray Holley, the Bulldogs should be fine running the ball, which should only open things up for a passing game that has plenty of experienced receivers and a quarterback finally comfortable with the playbook.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The defense wasn't good last year and there is nothing jumping out on the roster to indicate it will be much better this year. The secondary is the weakness, and while it should improve, that isn't saying much considering the Bulldogs surrendered more than 290 passing yards per game in 2010.

OFFENSE

When pass-happy offensive guru Sony Dykes was hired at Louisiana Tech before the 2010 season, two things were supposed to be certain: The Bulldogs would throw like crazy and their starting quarterback wouldn't be the problem.

But Dykes never could settle on a starter behind center last season, naming five different starters at different points, including one who never took a snap. This year, Dykes hopes a solid spring from junior Colby Cameron (three starts in 2010) will settle Tech's offensive woes.

Cameron isn't a perfect fit, but with a plethora of playmakers at wide receiver — namely Tim Molton (if healthy), Taulib Ikharo and Richie Casey — the passing game should look more like what fans expected from Dykes.

Even if it doesn't, the Bulldogs might just have the best running back in the league in Lennon Creer, who exploded onto the scene in 2010 with 1,181 yards and 10 touchdowns despite starting only six games.

His backup, Ray Holley, could start on a lot of WAC teams and will provide a potent 1-2 punch behind a serviceable, albeit largely untested, offensive line.

DEFENSE

There wasn't much mystery to Louisiana Tech's struggles in 2010. The defense surrendered 290.2 passing yards per game, last in the WAC and No. 117 of 120 nationally.

There will be three new starters in the secondary with the anchor being the lone returning starter, strong safety Chad Boyd, who was second on the team in tackles (80). He led the Bulldogs in interceptions (four).

The questions are at corner with Ryan Williams (four starts in 2010) and undersized but talented DeMarcion Evans.

Maybe more important than who is in the secondary will be finding pass-rushing help for defensive end Matt Broha, whose nine sacks in 2010 were good for third in the WAC. Louisiana Tech got very little penetration from its interior line. The hope is more depth at the position, even if void of an obvious star player, will lead offensive linemen to stop doubling Broha outside.

The linebackers — with Jay Dudley (94 tackles), Adrien Cole (80 tackles) and Solomon Randle (68 tackles) — are the strength of the defense once again.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Bulldogs lose one of the WAC's great return specialists in Phillip Livas. Wide receivers Richie Casey and Lyle Fitte will take a stab at the kick returns, while cornerback Ryan Williams likely will be the primary punt returner.

Matt Nelson returns as the kicker after making 14 of 18 field goal attempts in 2010, with a long of 47 yards. Punter Ryan Allen was steady last year, averaging 40.8 yards, with 21 dropped inside the 20.

OVERVIEW

Based on the landscape of the now Boise State-less WAC, and with Nevada losing several key seniors, Louisiana Tech thinks a full offseason under Dykes puts it in position to compete for a league title. The Bulldogs' schedule will make that tough, but with consistency at quarterback and any improvement on pass defense, the Bulldogs could at least push for a return to bowl eligibility.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Jon'al White: The 300-pound local product was a run stuffer at the junior college level, and the Bulldogs are in desperate need of help on the interior of the defensive line. Even if he doesn't start from day one, it's easy to imagine White working his way into a healthy dose of playing time in a hurry.

2011 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	10	Colby Cameron	6-2	205	Jr.
RB	**5**	**Lennon Creer***	**6-1**	**215**	**Sr.**
WR	**17**	**Taulib Ikharo***	**5-11**	**185**	**Sr.**
WR	**1**	**Richie Casey***	**5-11**	**185**	**Jr.**
WR	11	Tim Molton	6-2	180	Jr.
WR	13	Ahmad Paige	6-1	180	So.
LT	79	Kris Cavitt	6-2	300	Sr.
LG	**57**	**Kavin Saia***	**6-2**	**305**	**Jr.**
C	**63**	**Stephen Warner***	**6-3**	**315**	**Jr.**
RG	69	Vince Cano	6-2	305	So.
RT	67	Jordan Mills	6-6	315	Jr.
DEFENSE					
LE	**91**	**Matt Broha***	**6-4**	**255**	**Sr.**
LT	53	Adam Hymel	6-0	265	Sr.
RT	70	Justin Ellis	6-2	340	So.
RE	**41**	**IK Enemkpli***	**6-1**	**225**	**So.**
LB	48	Dusty Rust	6-3	225	Sr.
LB	**44**	**Adrien Cole***	**5-11**	**250**	**Sr.**
LB	**45**	**Jay Dudley***	**6-3**	**225**	**Sr.**
CB	23	Ryan Williams	5-11	185	Jr.
CB	11	DeMarcion Evans	5-8	175	Sr.
SS	**31**	**Chad Boyd***	**5-10**	**200**	**Jr.**
FS	20	Jamel Johnson	6-1	200	Jr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**33**	**Matt Nelson***	**5-10**	**160**	**Jr.**
P	**86**	**Ryan Allen***	**6-2**	**215**	**Jr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2011 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3	at Southern Miss
Sept. 10	CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Sept. 17	HOUSTON
Sept. 24	at Mississippi State
Oct. 1	HAWAII
Oct. 8	at Idaho
Oct. 22	at Utah State
Oct. 29	SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 5	at Fresno State
Nov. 12	at Ole Miss
Nov. 19	at Nevada
Nov. 26	NEW MEXICO STATE

2010 RESULTS

W	vs. Grambling State	20-6
L	at Texas A&M	16-48
L	NAVY	23-37
L	SOUTHERN MISS	12-13
L	at Hawaii	21-41
W	UTAH STATE	24-6
W	IDAHO	48-35
L	at Boise State	20-49
L	FRESNO STATE	34-40
W	at New Mexico State	41-20
W	at San Jose State	45-38
L	NEVADA	17-35

2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.8	59
Rushing	170.9	40
Passing	218.9	62
Total	389.8	49
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.7	90
Rushing	171.9	81
Passing	290.2	117
Total	462.1	116
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-5	-0.42	83

THE RACE

The SEC East was a mess.

Florida crashed without Superman. Georgia lost its first three conference games. Tennessee started 0-5 in the SEC. South Carolina beat Alabama but by mid-October managed to be just 2-2 in the league.

On the other side, defending national champion and preseason No. 1 Alabama, trying to navigate a difficult schedule, reached 5-0 before falling 35-21 to the Gamecocks.

That brings us to Auburn and LSU.

Somewhat improbably, each team was undefeated when they met at Auburn on Oct. 23. LSU had "lost" to Tennessee ... before the Tigers won 16-14 following a Vols penalty for having 13 defenders on the field. By that time, Auburn had won three close league games, needing a 19-play, 86-yard drive to set up a last-second 24-yard field goal to win at Kentucky.

With SEC supremacy on the line, LSU's stout defense was just road kill for the Auburn express, led by amazing quarterback Cam Newton. Auburn rushed for 440 yards — its most ever against an SEC foe — and claimed a 24-17 victory.

While South Carolina rallied for its first East title, clinching it on Steve Spurrier's old stomping grounds in Florida's Swamp, Auburn just kept on winning in the West. The Tigers' epic rally to defeat Alabama 28-27 wasn't necessary to reach the SEC title game, but it allowed Auburn to step onto the BCS stage.

And that's where Auburn landed after routing South Carolina for the SEC crown.

THE CHAMPION

Auburn, which was picked to finish third in the SEC West by the league's media, didn't always win big, but the Tigers just always won.

Auburn had to come from behind in nine of its 14 victories. Four times, the Tigers were down by double digits. It never mattered.

Two guys without much name recognition beyond The Plains when the season started became two of the most celebrated players in college football. Cam Newton was the best quarterback in the land. Nick Fairley was the nation's most disruptive defensive linemen.

Following a season of off-field controversy surrounding Newton (a former Florida Gator), the Tigers went all the way to the final drive of the BCS title game in Glendale, Ariz. Oregon forged a 19-19 tie with 2:33 to go, but Auburn fittingly finished with one more rally — 73 yards in seven plays, largely behind the running (and balance) of tailback Michael Dyer — and won it won it all on a Wes Bynum 19-yard field goal.

THE STARS

Offensive Player of the Year: Cam Newton, QB, Auburn

The Heisman winner was responsible for 51 touchdowns — including 30 by passing. Think of it this way: 70 *teams* didn't score as many touchdowns. Newton set a school record with 4,327 yards of total offense. "He's probably the best player I've ever seen," coach Gene Chizik said.

Defensive Player of the Year: Nick Fairley, DT, Auburn

Few saw Fairley coming before the season, and nobody could stop him once everyone knew his name. Fairley, who started only twice in 2009, used a unblockable blend of speed, power, and nastiness to finish with 11.5 sacks and 24.0 tackles for loss as the most dominating defender in the country.

Coach of the Year: Gene Chizik, Auburn

With snickers from the peanut gallery and howls from the Auburn faithful, the Tigers hired Chizik (he of the 5-19 record at Iowa State) after the 2008 season. With a combination of recruiting and toughness, he delivered a national title in his second year. Who's laughing now?

THE BOWLS

The SEC placed a record 10 teams into the postseason for the second consecutive year and managed to win most of the big ones. Yep, that includes the BCS Championship Game as Auburn kept alive the SEC's winning streak, giving the league a remarkable five consecutive victories in the season's final game (Florida, LSU, Florida, Alabama, Auburn).

BCS title game	**Auburn 22**, Oregon 19
Sugar	Ohio State 31, **Arkansas** 26
Cotton	**LSU 41**, Texas A&M 24
Capital One	**Alabama** 49, Michigan State 7
Outback	**Florida 37**, Penn State 24
Chick-fil-A	Florida State 26, **South Carolina** 17
Gator	**Mississippi State** 52, Michigan 14
Music City	North Carolina 30, **Tennessee** 27
Liberty	UCF 10, **Georgia** 6
BBVA Compass	Pittsburgh 27, **Kentucky** 10

ALL-SEC TEAM

*as selected by the league coaches

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Cam Newton	Auburn
RB	Marcus Lattimore	South Carolina
RB	Stevan Ridley	LSU
WR	Alshon Jeffery	South Carolina
WR	Julio Jones	Alabama
TE	D.J. Williams	Arkansas
C	Ryan Pugh	Auburn
OL	Derek Sherrod	Mississippi State
OL	Lee Ziemba	Auburn
OL	DeMarcus Love	Arkansas
OL	James Carpenter	Alabama
OL	Clint Boling	Georgia
K	Blair Walsh	Georgia
AP	Randall Cobb	Kentucky
RS	Patrick Peterson	LSU

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Ryan Mallett	Arkansas
RB	Knile Davis	Arkansas
RB	Mark Ingram	Alabama
WR	A.J. Green	Georgia
WR	Randall Cobb	Kentucky
TE	Orson Charles	Georgia
C	William Vlachos	Alabama
OL	Larry Warford	Kentucky
OL	Barrett Jones	Alabama
OL	Garrett Chisolm	South Carolina
OL	Joseph Barksdale	LSU
K	Josh Jasper	LSU
AP	Trent Richardson	Alabama
RS	Trent Richardson	Alabama

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Drake Nevis	LSU
DL	Marcell Dareus	Alabama
DL	Nick Fairley	Auburn
DL	Pernell McPhee	Mississippi State
LB	Danny Trevathan	Kentucky
LB	Kelvin Sheppard	LSU
LB	Justin Houston	Georgia
DB	Patrick Peterson	LSU
DB	Mark Barron	Alabama
DB	Ahmad Black	Florida
DB	Stephon Gilmore	South Carolina
P	Chas Henry	Florida

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Jake Bequette	Arkansas
DL	Cliff Matthews	South Carolina
DL	Devin Taylor	South Carolina
DL	Jerrell Powe	Ole Miss
LB	Dont'a Hightower	Alabama
LB	Chris White	Mississippi State
LB	Chris Marve	Vanderbilt
LB	Jerry Franklin	Arkansas
DB	Robert Lester	Alabama
DB	Janoris Jenkins	Florida
DB	Casey Hayward	Vanderbilt
DB	Janzen Jackson	Tennessee
DB	Dre Kirkpatrick	Alabama
DB	Morris Claiborne	LSU
P	Drew Butler	Georgia

THE STANDINGS

EASTERN

Team	W-L	PCT.	PF	PA	W-L	PCT	PF	PA
South Carolina	5-3	.625	222	179	9-5	.643	433	324
Florida	4-4	.500	224	186	8-5	.615	388	277
Georgia	3-5	.375	232	200	6-7	.462	417	287
Tennessee	3-5	.375	179	205	6-7	.462	351	326
Kentucky	2-6	.250	214	267	6-7	.462	406	369
Vanderbilt	1-7	.125	96	271	2-10	.167	203	374

WESTERN

Team	W-L	PCT.	PF	PA	W-L	PCT	PF	PA
Auburn	8-0	1.000	306	224	14-0	1.000	577	337
LSU	6-2	.750	212	165	11-2	.846	386	237
Arkansas	6-2	.750	291	225	10-3	.769	474	304
Alabama	5-3	.625	218	143	10-3	.769	464	176
Mississippi State	4-4	.500	151	173	9-4	.692	377	258
Mississippi	1-7	.125	194	301	4-8	.333	367	422

SOUTH FLORIDA BULLS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Todd Fitch | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mark Snyder** | **STADIUM: Raymond James Stadium: 65,000**

AT A GLANCE

RECORD:
8-5 overall, 3-4 Big East (T-5th)

COACH:
Skip Holtz — At USF: 8-5, 1 year; overall: 80-55, 11 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 4 offense, 6 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB B.J. Daniels, RB Demetris Murray, WR Terrence Mitchell, RG Chaz Hine, DE Ryne Giddins, LB Sam Barrington, LB DeDe Lattimore, FS Jerrell Young

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The running game should be more productive with transfers Darrell Scott (Colorado) and Dontae Aycock (Auburn) pushing Murray. Giddins and Patrick Hampton have the potential to carry on USF's tradition of pass-rushing ends.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Depth remains an issue at wide receiver, although the potential return of Sterling Griffin and A.J. Love from injuries should ease the problem. Love, who was granted a sixth year of eligibility, was not on the post-spring depth chart but figures prominently in USF's plans. The key factor will be how much Daniels has matured at quarterback. He was prone to crippling turnovers last year.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Dontavia Bogan, RB Moise Plancher, C Sampson Genus, DE David Bedford, DE Craig Marshall, LB Jacquian Williams, CB Mistral Raymond

OVERVIEW:
The Bulls have the potential to contend in the Big East — if they get steady play at quarterback and consistent production out of their receivers. The defense should be as solid as last year's unit. USF's first two league games and four of the seven overall are on the road, which can be difficult, but the last two are at home.

Bulls eyeing Big East title

USF, with bowl trips in six consecutive years, has a knack for getting to the postseason.

But fans are growing impatient with trips out of the country and to bowls named for pizzas and automotive supply stores. They are looking for the Bulls to break through to the BCS level.

The Bulls best opportunity might come this fall.

They not only return key personnel on both sides of the ball, but three of the usual Big East contenders — defending champion Connecticut, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh — will have new coaches, and there could be some period of adjustment there.

A future Big East BCS challenger, TCU, doesn't come onboard until the 2012 season.

That doesn't clinch anything, but it does present a rare shot for a USF team that returns 12 starters, including both kickers.

"I see the pieces in place," coach Skip Holtz said. "I think there's talent on this football team. I think these guys are working really good, and I think they have an unbelievable attitude.

"That gives us a chance to get there."

Despite some early struggles offensively, the Bulls weren't that far away from winning the conference title a year ago. Three of their four Big East losses were by a total of 14 points.

They lost 13-9 to Syracuse when they couldn't score an offensive touchdown, and they fell 17-10 to Pittsburgh despite limiting the Panthers to just a field goal in the first half. And they dropped their regular-season finale at home to Connecticut, 19-16, on a 52-yard field goal with 17 seconds left.

The Bulls recovered from that disappointment with a bowl win over Clemson.

"Our next hurdle that we really need to climb is we need to represent the Big East," Holtz said. "We need to win the Big East. Those are the goals that we have, the things that we want to accomplish.

"I don't think there's any doubt that's where we need to go."

OFFENSE

It's hardly big news that the Bulls are going to need a solid year from junior B.J. Daniels at quarterback.

Daniels was a more accurate passer as a sophomore (58.4 percent) than as a redshirt freshman (53.2), but his interceptions went from nine to 13 — and a couple were momentum-changing picks that led to defeats.

Holtz liked the maturity Daniels showed in the spring.

"B.J.'s evolved," Holtz said. "His growth has been tremendous."

Daniels looks to go back to his old ways of cutting loose with his running ability. With no proven depth at the position, Holtz kept Daniels somewhat in check last year, and his rushing yards dropped from a team-best 772 in 2009 to 259.

"Last year we put him in a glass bubble," Holtz said.

The bubble bursts in 2011. The Bulls have depth at quarterback.

Sophomore Bobby Eveld came off the bench late last season to lead the Bulls to an overtime win over Miami, and acquitted himself well in the loss to Connecticut. Freshman Matt Floyd had an impressive spring.

Daniels loses his favorite target with Dontavia Bogan's departure, but A.J. Love and Sterling Griffin, who both missed 2010 with knee injuries, return, providing more depth at wide receiver.

Sophomore Terrence Mitchell, who was converted to wide receiver from

defensive back midway through the season, and junior Evan Landi, the leading returning receiver (28 catches), are the starters going into the fall.

Though leading rusher Moise Plancher is gone, Demetris Murray (542 yards rushing) is back and joined by transfers Darrell Scott and Dontae Aycock.

Up front, the big loss is All-Big East center Sampson Genus. Seniors Jeremiah Warren and Chaz Hine are returning two-year starters at guard. Junior tackle Mark Popek has nine career starts in two years.

DEFENSE

It would be difficult to place blame for the league setbacks on the defense, which ranked 17th in the country overall. Despite some key losses, Holtz likes the prospects of a repeat performance.

"I think we have the chance to be a pretty good defensive football team again this year," he said.

Sophomore Ryne Giddins, who got a taste of action as a true freshman in 2009 before being sidelined by injury, could be the next big star at end for USF. He has 5.5 sacks in 15 games (3.5 in 2010). Senior Patrick Hampton also is a good pass rusher at the other end.

Junior Cory Grissom is a returning starter at defensive tackle, and senior Keith McCaskill has five career starts, all in 2009, at nose tackle.

Junior Sam Barrington and sophomore DeDe Lattimore are returning starters at linebacker, and junior Michael Lanaris is a proven veteran there.

But the most intriguing guy at linebacker is redshirt freshman Reshard Cliett. A converted safety, Cliett finished the spring at the top of the depth chart at the SAM position.

Junior strong safety Jon Lejiste, senior free safety Jerrell Young and senior corner Quenton Washington are returning starters, and junior corner Kayvon Webster has 10 starts in the past two years.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Bulls are in good shape on special teams. Junior Maikon Bonani returned in 2010 after sitting out 2009 with a back injury and was 17 of 21 on field goal attempts, including 13 of 13 from 39 yards and in.

Junior Justin Brockhaus-Kann averaged only 37.6 yards on punts, but he downed 19 inside the opponent's 20-yard line with no touchbacks. Freshman Chris Veron will challenge him.

Junior Lindsey Lamar (26.6-yard average) ran two kickoffs back for touchdowns. Mitchell averaged 11.0-yards on 21 punt returns with a long of 67 yards.

— Paul Borden

B.J. Daniels
Photo by Bruce Schwartzman

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2010 stats: 144.8 ypg rushing (6th in Big East/71st NCAA), 164.5 passing (7th/101st), 309.4 total offense (7th/105th), 24.1 ppg (6th/85th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	B.J. Daniels*	Jr.	A two-year starter as a dual threat.	Bobby Eveld, So.
RB	Demetris Murray	Jr.	Moves from backup to starter in 2011.	Darrell Scott, Jr.
FB	Armando Sanchez	Jr.	Moved to offense after two years at linebacker.	Chris Breit, Jr.
WR	Evan Landi*	Jr.	Team's leading returning receiver (28-390, 2 TDs).	Deonte Welch, Fr.
WR	Terrence Mitchell	So.	Was moved from defense at midseason.	Sterling Griffin, So.
TE	Andreas Shields	Jr.	Started in the bowl win over Clemson.	Isaac Virgin, So.
LT	Mark Popek	Jr.	Knee injury limited him to seven games in 2010.	Darren Powe, Sr.
LG	Jeremiah Warren*	Sr.	Has started 26 games over last two years.	John McGhin, So.
C	Kevin McCaskill	Sr.	Made seven appearances as a backup in 2010.	Austin Reiter, Fr.
RG	Chaz Hine*	Sr.	Joins Warren as a returning two-year starter.	Danous Estenor, Jr.
RT	Quinterrius Eatmon	Fr.	Earned starting spot coming out of spring.	Damien Edwards, Jr.
K	Maikon Bonani*	Jr.	Won back his job last season.	Marvin Kloss, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2010 stats: 125.5 ypg rushing (3rd in Big East/22nd NCAA), 192.3 passing (5th/24th), 317.8 total defense (5th/17th), 20.0 ppg (5th/22nd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ryne Giddins	So.	An excellent pass rusher from the fringe.	Claude Davis, Sr.
NT	Cory Grissom*	Jr.	Veteran anchors the defensive front.	Luke Sager, So.
DT	Keith McCaskill	Sr.	Has five starts in 38 career appearances.	Demi Thompson, So.
DE	Patrick Hampton	Sr.	Made first career start late last season.	Julius Forte, So.
LB	Reshard Cliett	Fr.	Began his USF career at safety.	Curtis Weatherspoon, Sr.
LB	Sam Barrington*	Jr.	A proven performer in the middle.	Michael Lanaris, Jr.
LB	DeDe Lattimore*	So.	Made 12 starts as a redshirt freshman.	Mike Jeune, Jr.
CB	Kayvon Webster	Jr.	An experienced hand in the secondary.	George Baker, Jr.
CB	Quenton Washington*	Sr.	Lockdown corner is a two-year starter.	Ernie Tabuteau, Jr.
SS	Jon Lejiste*	Jr.	Returning starter recorded four sacks in 2010.	JaQuez Jenkins, So.
FS	Jerrell Young*	Sr.	Led the Bulls with three interceptions.	Mark Joyce, So.
P	Justin Brockhaus-Kann*	Jr.	Not a big average, but consistent	Chris Veron, Fr.

*Returning Starter

A LOOK BACK

5 Years Ago: 2006

Darren McFadden

Photo by Wesley Hitt/WireImage

Florida's only stumble was a heartbreaker at Auburn on Oct. 14, but that came early enough for the Gators to climb over the carcasses of other fallen teams and reach the BCS national title game. Florida clinched its first division title since 2000 with a win over Vanderbilt on Nov. 4. The West was crazier. Arkansas had been rebuilding toward this season, but a 50-14 loss to USC in the opener made it hard to take them seriously. Yet, all the Hogs did was win, wrapping up the division before having to play LSU — probably the most talented team in the West — in the regular-season finale.

The Gators sometimes skated by, winning five games decided by a touchdown or less. That wasn't so much a weakness but a sign of toughness and character. Coach Urban Meyer took Ron Zook's four- and five-star recruits, added a dash of Percy Harvin and Tim Tebow (among others), and coached 'em up into a dangerous, fast team — one that blew past top-ranked Ohio State in the BCS title game.

SEC champion: Florida (13-1, 7-1)

SEC MVP: Darren McFadden, RB, Arkansas (offense); Patrick Willis, LB, Mississippi (defense)

Heisman Trophy: Troy Smith, QB, Ohio State; 2nd, McFadden

National champion: Florida. The Gators beat Ohio State, 41-14, beginning a streak of five consecutive title-game wins for the SEC.

10 Years Ago: 2001

LSU hadn't won the SEC title since 1988, and with three league losses before November, it didn't look as if 2001 would be the season that broke the streak. It was then that the Tigers found their missing higher gear, especially on offense. Not many could match LSU's offensive skill, led by record-setting receiver Josh Reed, all-league running back LaBrandon Toefield and tough-guy QB Rohan Davey. LSU won its final six games, including a 47-34 Sugar Bowl decision over Ohio State. Along the way, the Tigers knocked off sluggish Tennessee, 31-20, in the SEC title game, denying the Vols a spot in the national championship Rose Bowl.

SEC champion: LSU (10-3, 5-3)

SEC MVP: Rex Grossman, QB, Florida (offense); Alex Brown, DE, Florida (defense)

Heisman Trophy: Eric Crouch, QB, Nebraska; 2nd, Grossman

National champion: Miami. The Hurricanes, behind QB Ken Dorsey and first-year coach Larry Coker, beat Nebraska, 37-14. The Cornhuskers, in a controversial and embarrassing twist of the BCS computers, advanced to the final game despite not making the Big 12 title game.

15 Years Ago: 1996

After No. 2 Florida State had beaten No. 1 Florida, 24-21, in the showdown at the end of the regular season, the Gators still managed to finish No. 3 in the polls. That put Florida in the Sugar Bowl in a strange rematch with the Seminoles. When No. 2 Arizona State was knocked off by Ohio State in the Rose Bowl that left the Sugar to claim an undisputed national title game, and Steve Spurrier and his Gators would not disappoint.

Danny Wuerffel had a big game, as Florida rolled to a surprisingly easy 52-20 victory — Florida's first national title. Wuerffel led the SEC-record breaking offense to 46.6 points a game and became the first Heisman winner to play for a Heisman winner (Spurrier, 1966).

SEC champion: Florida (12-1, 8-0)

Heisman Trophy and SEC MVP: Danny Wuerffel, QB, Florida

National champion: Florida (beat Florida State in the Sugar Bowl).

20 Years Ago: 1991

Florida blew away Alabama 35-0 in Week 2, and went from there, driving to its first 10-win season, its first-ever official SEC championship and the real beginning of a 20-year rise of Gator football. In Steve Spurrier's second season, quarterback Shane Matthews and defensive tackle Brad Culpepper helped to establish the kind of passing game and defensive dominance now expected in Gainesville. Florida rolled to five of the next six SEC championships.

Alabama, meantime, responded to the humiliating loss to Florida by starting an SEC-record-tying 28-game winning streak that continued through their perfect 1992 national championship season and beyond.

SEC champion: Florida (10-2, 7-0)

SEC MVP: Shane Matthews, QB, Florida

Heisman Trophy: Desmond Howard, WR/KR/PR, Michigan; 5th, Matthews

National champion: Miami (AP poll, beat Nebraska in the Orange Bowl); Washington (coaches poll, beat Michigan in the Rose Bowl).

25 Years Ago: 1986

LSU opened the season by beating a weak Texas A&M team ... and was then stunned by Miami of Ohio. This was not what coach Bill Arnsparger had envisioned, but what followed was exactly what he had in mind. The Tigers went on to win one of the great SEC races, beating contenders Georgia and Alabama, rattling off a 8-1 record the rest of the way. Four teams tied one game behind the 5-1 champions.

Cornelius Bennett

Photo by Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images

Arnsparger, long considered a defensive mastermind in the NFL as Don Shula's right-hand man with the Miami Dolphins, retired after the 1986 season, just his third at the helm, with two second-place finishes and an SEC title. He walked away leaving Tiger fans forever wondering what kind of dynasty could have been built. He took over as athletic director at Florida, and soon hired Steve Spurrier, making an impact on another SEC power.

SEC champion: LSU (9-3, 5-1)

SEC MVP: Cornelius Bennett, LB, Alabama

Heisman Trophy: Vinny Testaverde, QB, Miami; 6th, Brent Fullwood, RB, Auburn

National champion: Penn State (beat Miami in the Fiesta Bowl).

50 Years Ago: 1961

In his fourth season at Alabama, Bear Bryant brought home the gold — an 11-0 season and the Tide's first national championship since World War II. Of course, he would go on to hang some sort of national title banner EIGHT MORE TIMES in his 25 years in Tuscaloosa. OK, some of those were not the "consensus" title that is widely recognized, but don't try to convince Tide fans that, for instance, 11-0 Alabama of 1966 was not as deserving as 9-0-1 Notre Dame or Michigan State, which also claim shares of the crown. This edition, led by Billy Neighbors and Lee Roy Jordan, was unbelievably strong, shutting out its last five SEC opponents and shutting down high-powered Arkansas in the Sugar Bowl, 10-3.

SEC champion: Alabama (11-0, 7-0)

SEC MVP: Pat Trammel, QB, Alabama

Heisman Trophy: Ernie Davis, RB, Syracuse; 5th, Trammel

National champion: It was all about the Tide, with the AP (media) and UPI (coaches) polls favoring them over 8-0-1 Ohio State, but the Buckeyes and venerable Woody Hayes got the nod from the Football Writers Association, despite a season-opening tie against TCU.

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